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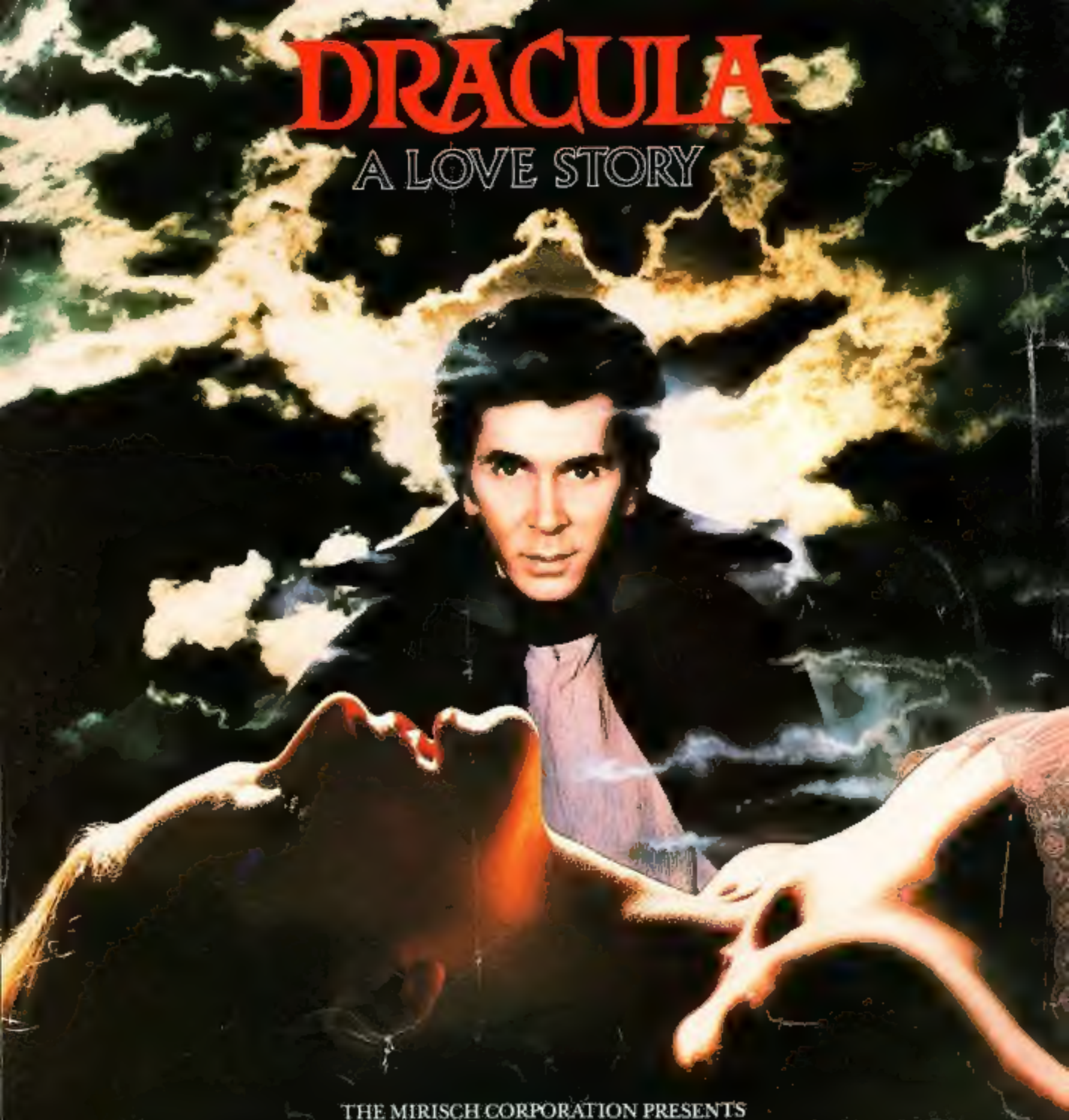

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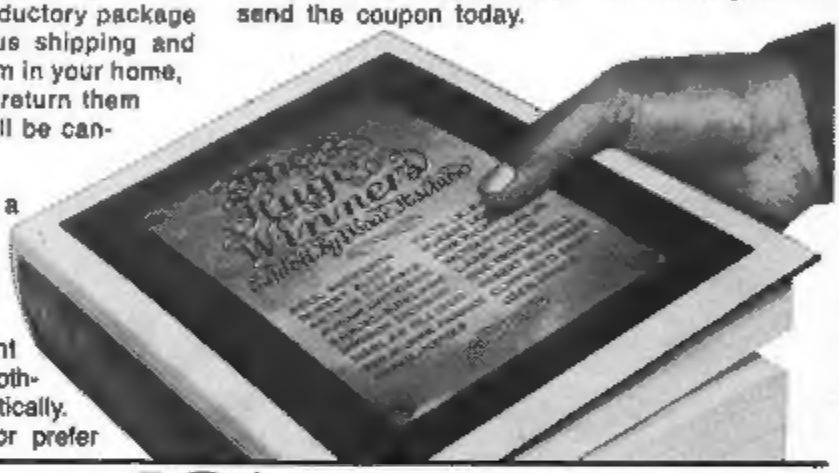

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...Twenty-nine...

And so we bid farewell to Morris White, the stuffed shirt from outer space, with the final chapter of "Diabolical Planet" herein. And adieu, as well, to the cast and crew of *Starcrown*, the illustrated novel we have been serializing, now about to appear in book form from Ariel Books.

"Galactic Geographic" is back, and we refill our rock 'n' roll prescription with "Sympathy for the Devil," a [illegible] comes to us out of Toronto, Canada, about Rolling Stones, or a [illegible]

You might like to know what's coming up in future issues, so you can start putting money aside. In October we will unleash our all-Lovecraft edition, which we are editing only on dark, rainy nights. November, as things are shaping up, looks like an Ancient Astronauts number.

There's an "End of the World" issue planned for early '80—and it's hard to plan for after the end of the world.

Our French friends, forgetful of how helpful we were to them on June 6 some years ago, have not sent us the final chapter of Macedo's "Teletield," for which you are doubtless holding your collective breath. If it ain't here next month, we'll describe what happens, and spoil it for everyone. That'll show them.

We call your attention to the Cazu "New Ark" story in this issue. Editors here think it should be animated as part of a projected *HM* movie. Publishers aren't sure. What do you think? Maybe we can outvote 'em.

—S.K.

Phgola... *Dragonworld*, by Byron Preiss and J. Michael Reaves (excerpted in the pages that [illegible] a Bantam trade paperback that will be out by fall. A signed, limited hardcover edition of 1,000 copies, with a hand-tipped book plate, is available for $19.95 (plus 95 cents postage) from Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Inc., 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Illustration by Peter Tyburn

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TIME OUT: OPUS ∞

BY VAL MAYERIK

THIS TIME OF RECREATION IS ALWAYS A JOYOUS TIME FOR ME, BUT, I CANNOT DO IT ALONE,
I NEED LEFCAUTIO, AND THIS TIME IS NEVER JOYOUS FOR HIM. AS COUNTLESS TIMES BEFORE, I MUST ASK HIS HELP...
... AND AS COUNTLESS TIMES BEFORE, HE WILL REFUSE ME...
... AND AS COUNTLESS TIMES BEFORE, I WILL HAVE TO CONVINCE HIM.

LEFCAUTIO, WAKE UP. IT'S TIME... WE HAVE WORK TO DO.
you h... huh... whu th' fu...
WHAT'S GOIN' ON... WHO'S ZERE?
IT IS I, EVADNIE. IT IS TIME.
TIME MY ASS! I TOLD YOU NEVER TO COME BACK HERE GOD-DAMNIT! I'M THROUGH WITH THIS WHOLE SHITTIN' MESS. IT'S NOT WORTH IT. CAN'T YOU SEE THAT? NOW GET LOST!
WE GO THROUGH THIS EVERY TIME, LEFCAUTIO. IF YOU COULD JUST TRY TO UNDER-STAND...
UNDERSTAND MY ASS! WHY KEEP ON RECREATING THE UNIVERSE ANYHOW? I LIKE OBLIVION, I LIKE ENTROPY. THEY RELAX ME. I'M JUST NOT INTO IT ANYMORE. NOW GO AWAY!
THERE'S MORE INVOLVED THAN YOU BEING "INTO IT," LEFCAUTIO, AND YOU KNOW THAT. THIS DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE FOR US. WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

THERE IS ALWAYS THAT, ISN'T THERE SHIT!! NO MORE GRAND ALTERNATIVES. AS NIETZCHE SAID, "EVERY MAN IS A PRISONER OF HIS OWN LENGTH, BREADTH, AND DEPTH OF CONSCIOUSNESS." BUT WHY IS IT ALWAYS WE WHO HAVE TO BUST OUR ASSES? WHY CAN'T THEY JUST LET SPACE RENEGOTIATE ITSELF ON A SUB-ATOMIC LEVEL
I MEAN, HEGEL SAID THAT IN BECOMING AND BEING, NONBEING WILL POSIT ITSELF
PLEASE! CUT THE SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL SHIT WE SHOULD BE GETTING STARTED
AH, ME. ALL THESE TRAGIC INTERRUPTIONS IN THE GRIM JOURNEY FROM ONE PIT TO ANOTHER
COME TO ME MY STRINGED LOVELY. WHOSE GENIUS SHALL WE EXTOLE THIS TIME? BARTOK, VIVALDI SHOSTAKOVICH?
I MUST TUNE. IF YOU DON'T MIND.
TAKE YOUR TIME. I'LL JUST WARM UP.
READY WHEN YOU ARE
GOOD. SHALL WE BEGIN?

WELL I DONE IT I HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED
YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT IT'S MORE THAN YOU OR I BEING SATISFIED
NOTHING IS PERFECT, LEFCAUTIO I M SURE WE'LL FIND OURSELVES BACK TO GETHER BEFORE TOO LONG
JUST HOPE THAT T ALL HOLDS TOGETHER THIS TIME
WELL REMEMBER TH S SVADNIE. THE NEXT TIME YOU BOTHER MY ASS ABOUT THIS SHIT
I JUST MIGHT NOT BE SO DAMN COOPERATIVE
THE END

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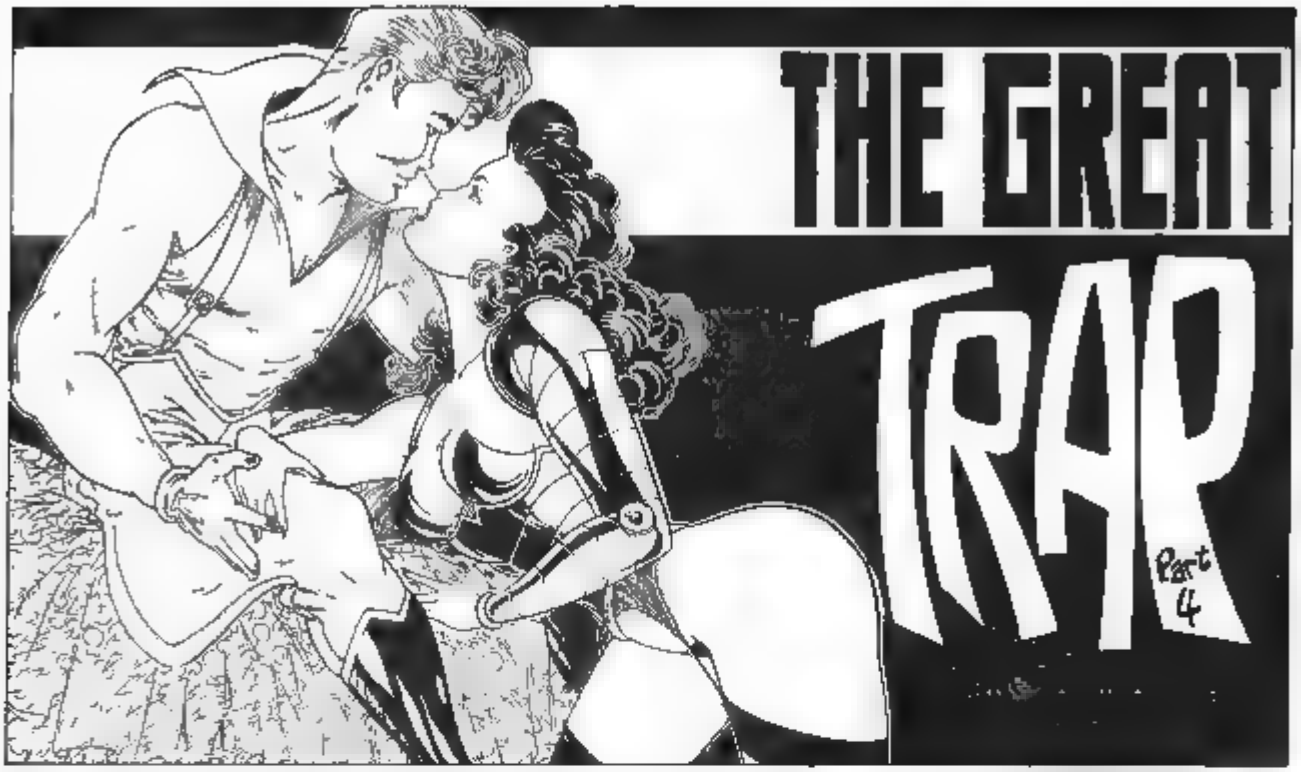
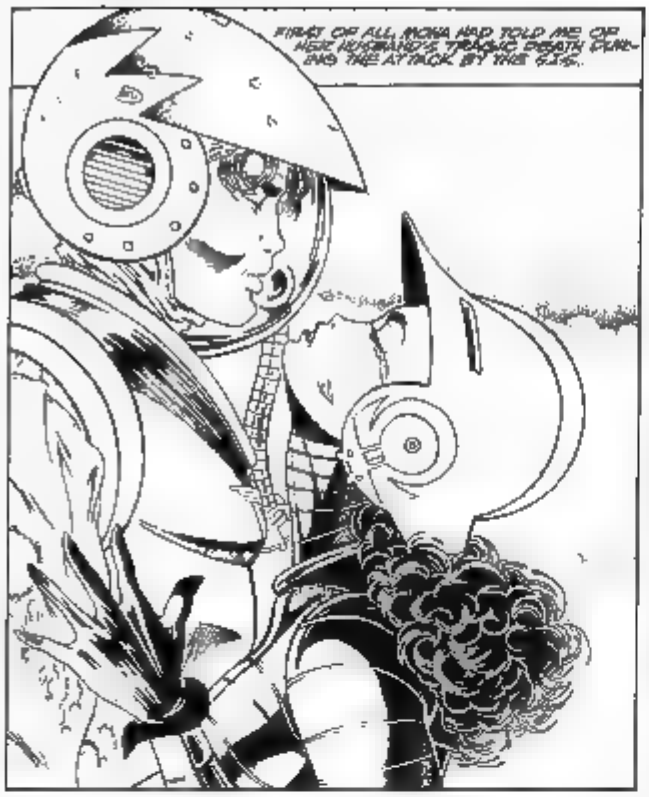


THE SPACE ADVENTURES OF MORRIS WHITE...

DENIS SIRE

THAT NIGHT, I AWAITED THE RETURN OF THE MOTOR PATROL... SIXTEEN MINUTES LATE, BY ALL THE GALAXIES!! EVERYTHING HAD GONE WRONG SINCE WE'D LANDED ON THAT INFERNAL PLANET!!

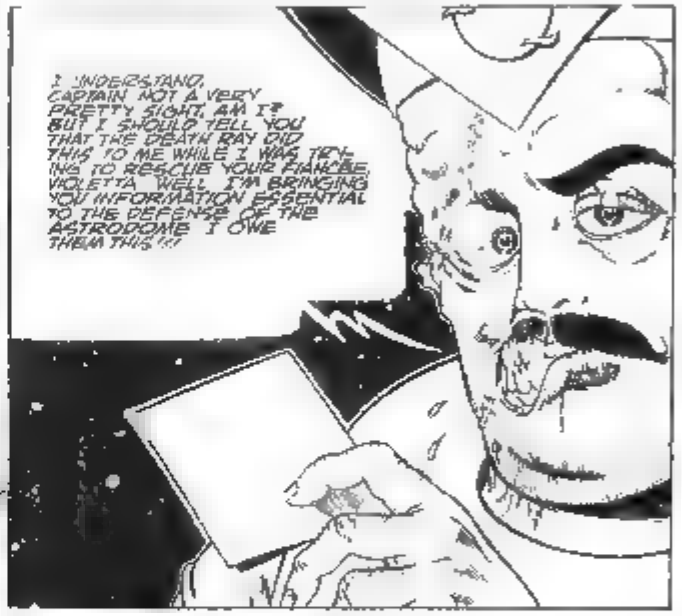

FIRST OF ALL, IKONA HAD TOLD ME OF HER HUSBAND'S TRAGIC DEATH DURING THE ATTACK BY THE S.S.S.

DESIRING TO PUT AN END TO IT, I LAUNCHED MY BOMBER SQUADRON AT THE ASTRODOME!!! CHECKMATE. WE HAD TO ABANDON THE ATTEMPT. THE BUILDING SEEMED TO BE PROTECTED BY A FORCE FIELD!

THE REBELS COUNTERATTACKED HARASSING US THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT

AT DAWN, OUR SENTRIES WERE SAVAGELY ASSAULTED.

THEN, MY MARINES FELL INTO A GHASTLY AMBUSH. IT WAS ALL TOO MUCH
MY IMAGE, MY VISION OF THOSE BRAVE LADS FALLEN ON THE FIELD OF HONOR, FAR FROM HOME, HAUNTED ME. AND I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KILLING. MUST STOP! AS COMMANDER I HAD TO FIND A WAY TO STOP IT!
BUT, WHY GO ON RETELLING THESE HORRIBLE OLD STORIES? THE REBELS ARE BOUND TO GIVE UP IN THE END. LISTEN, MORRIS, TIME IS ON OUR SIDE.
IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T WE JUST SURRENDER TO THE TRAITORS, HUH?
WHITE
BOOM
25


I UNDERSTAND, CAPTAIN. NOT A VERY PRETTY SIGHT, AM I? BUT I SHOULD TELL YOU THAT THE DEATH RAY DID THIS TO ME WHILE I WAS TRYING TO RESCUE YOUR FIANCÉE, VIOLETTA. WELL, I'M BRINGING YOU INFORMATION ESSENTIAL TO THE DEFENSE OF THE ASTRODOME. I OWE THEM THIS!!!

*SEE OPERATION OMEGA

HMM. I'LL NEED AN HOUR TO EFFECT THE NEUTRALIZATION OF THE REBEL DEFENSES. THEN YOU LET GO WITH YOUR NITRO-METHANE BOMBS. WHEN THEY BLOW THE ASTRODOME SKY HIGH WE'LL BEGIN THE FINAL ASSAULT!!
O.K. CAPTAIN! I'LL PASS THE ORDERS ALONG!

SOON.
NOW TO FINISH THESE BASCALS OFF AND THE SOONER THE BETTER!!
OUTTA HERE
MORRIS CLIMBS THE SHEER FACE OF THE VOLCANO THAT FORMS ONE WALL OF THE ASTRODROME..
ARRIVING AT THE TOP
JUST ONE SENTRY!!! BETTER NOT TAKE ANY CHANCES. HE'S WITHIN RANGE CAREFUL NOW.
ZAWN!
HIS BUDDIES WILL THINK HE'S BEEN ELECTRO-CUTED! NOW! HERE I GO!
AT LAST MORRIS REACHES THE MAIN BUILDING.
A WALL OF RAYS!
MEANWHILE..BACK AT THE CAMP
HEY, MIC! I KNOW YOU! MIC! YOU WERE WITH THAT BASTARD VON HIC! RICTUS! HIS ASSISTANT! MIC HIS WHORE FOR GOD'S SAKE WELL... WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT! HIC! AFTER I TAKE OVER THIS PLANET!
OH! MY GOD! IT'S NOW!
27

AND SO MONA RACES TO WARN STORCH THAT CAPTAIN WHITE IS IN DANGER!
I DON'T HAVE THE TIME OR INCLINATION TO LISTEN TO THE RAVINGS OF SOME CRAZY DAME! GET OUTA HERE!
VERY WELL, MR. STORCH! I'LL HANDLE THIS MYSELF!
MORRIS HESITATES. THEN, FLYING IN THE FACE OF DANGER, CLIMBS THROUGH THE WALL OF RAYS WITH AMAZING AGILITY.
OVERCOMES THE GUARDS
IF THIS ROBOT STAYS ON TRACK, IT WILL LEAD ME STRAIGHT TO THE MAGIC STONE
AND INDEED, THE ROBOT LEADS MORRIS TO THE CHAMBER OF THE TITAN STONE!!
LET'S HOPE THAT SCAR-FACED CHAP DISCONNECTED THE SECURITY SYSTEM!
AND MORRIS SEIZES THE TITAN STONE, PLUNGING THE CITY INTO DARKNESS
COME TO POPPA
AT THAT VERY MOMENT
SUPER! THERE'S WILL AND ALOO!

WITH A TERRIFYING CRASH THE BOMBS EXPLODE
WHILE CAPTAIN WHITE DASHES AWAY FROM THE CENTRAL BUILDING WITH HIS PRECIOUS PLUNDER.
GOT IT! I'VE GOT IT! NOW TO GET BACK TO MY TROOPS!
NOW THAT THE FORCE FIELD HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED THROUGH THE VALIANT EFFORTS OF THEIR CAPTAIN, THE CREW OF THE DUKE HAS NO PROBLEM GETTING THROUGH TO THE METRODOME!!!
I'VE GOT TO GET IN ON THE FINAL ASSAULT N TH MY COMMANDOS
SOMETHING BE HIND ME MY SENSES NEVER LIE!!
MORRIS TURNS SWIFTLY!!
YOU LOUT AND DROP YOUR WEAPON IT'S ALL OVER MY SOLDIERS WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE NOW!!
ET'S JUST ALK ABOUT IL TITAN ATONE, SHALL WE?
KINDLY SHUT YOUR FACE, OR I'LL SHUT IT FOR YOU!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, MORRIS! THEY WANT TO KILL YOU!

I TRIED TO GET TO YOU IN TIME BUT IT'S NOT TOO LATE YET! I CAN STILL SAVE YOU!
OBEYING ONLY HER HEART, MOHA TEARS HERSELF OUT OF THE TRAITOR'S GRASP MORRIS KNOCKS THE ROBOT ASIDE BUT
MORRIS HELP ME
I WARNED YOU LADY!
THE CAPTAIN'S PISTOL FIRES A FINAL FATAL SHOT AT THE TRAITOR!
MOHA WHAT DOG SHOT HER DOWN IN COLD BLOOD!
OH NO!
MORRIS TRIES TO REVIVE THE YOUNG WOMAN BUT TO NO AVAIL..
WHAT COURAGE SHE HAD! A BRAVE GIRL TO THE VERY END! BY THE ROCKETS RED GLARE! IS THAT OUR FLAG I SEE?
INDEED IT IS. WAVING FROM THE RAMPARTS OF THE CENTRAL BUILDING THE EARTHLINGS HAVE LIBERATED THE PLANET FROM THE TOTAL TARJAN VOICE OF THE MYSTERIOUS COMMANDER
THE WARRIORS REGROUP OUTSIDE THE BUILDING STORM IS ALREADY THERE SUDDENLY A SOLDIER CRIES OUT!
LOOK! OUR CAPTAIN MORRIS

THIS VICTOR BELONGS TO YOU, MY BRAVE LADY. CIVILIZATION AS WE KNOW IT OWES YOU A DEBT OF THANKS
CAPTAIN, COME SEE WHAT WE'VE FOUND-- THE COMMANDER'S CORPSE
POC ALIPTUS!! HELL! SO IT WAS HE! LOOKS LIKE HE WAS A DOUBLE AGENT! MY GOD! WHAT ABOUT VIOLETTA?!
I'LL LEAVE YOU NOW, WHITE, TO SAVOR YOUR VICTORY TO THE FULL
MOMENTS LATER
MORRIS! THANK GOD, YOU'RE SAFE AND SOUND! WE HAD SUCH A HARD TIME FINDING YOU!
IT'S TRUE WE JUST GOT IN FROM MERCURY!
AHH
BUT YOU'RE ALL BETTER, DARLING! AM I DREAMING? WHAT ABOUT POC ALIPTUS?
HE WAS AN OLD FRIEND OF THE COLONEL'S LET'S NOT THINK ABOUT IT NOW. IT'S ALL OVER!
YOU'RE RIGHT! FROM NOW ON, I'M THINKING ABOUT NOTHING BUT YOU... HONEY!
OH, MORRIS, YOU SILLY BILL! YOU'RE MAKING ME BLUSH!
THE END-

CHAIN MAIL

In Clyde Caldwell's Centaur's Idol (back cover, May 1979), the centaur has the arrow resting on the wrong side of the bow holding the bowstring wrong—should be three fingers, end of joints—for efficient release, and carrying the quiver wrong for a left-handed archer. Also female figure is cribbed from a most ancient *Playboy* republished in recent hardcover on pin-ups from days of Victoria to uninhibited seventies (or so we like to believe). Otherwise, color is gross and execution reminiscent of little old ladies in tennis shoes who paint log cabins, snowcapped mountains, and babbling brooks. Considering the confused nature of the entire composition, one is obliged to question its use by *HM*.

The question is: Why Gray Morrow's fondness for replicating the style of newspaper supplements? It is rumored that he is some kind of artist, but why does his work so resemble rough sketches? Granted, he demonstrates draftsmanship, but his finished work appears perfunctory. Those gawdy pages are just too tacky—overcrowded with competing script, color and figures—to rank as good art. And the story line ("Orion" included) reeks of B movies.

So much for comment on this issue. It was not the best. But considering the alternatives, it was still head and shoulders—til next time if there is—I remain,

Anonymously yours,
Dangbert Whiddlspoon Dangendoorf III.
Portland, Oregon

Dear Dangbert:

Or may we call you Dang? My goodness aren't we in a snit? "Tacky" is an adjective usually applied to polyester leisure suits, painted turtles and people who sign irreverent criticisms anonymously. The Eds.

Mes ami(e)s:

I don't wish to complain, but I have a couple of points that I think you should consider. I feel that I've been betrayed—I had always considered *Heavy Metal* to be a fantasy art magazine, not a science fiction publication. However, over the last three or four months I have noticed less art and more endless variations on the *Star Wars* theme. In other words, your magazine is turning to vomit. Originality has all but disappeared. Would you please stop this shit and bring back the real artists? C'mon, do it for me and I'll send you a Darth Vader doll to play with.

Bob Vega
New Orleans, Louisiana

Mon ami,

What magazine have you been reading? You've no doubt been vacationing in another galaxy far, far away. Heavy Metal has more original art now than ever before! Forget the Darth Vader doll—show us your Wookie and we'll show you ours. —The Eds.

Dear *Heavy Metal*

I'd like to say that your magazine seems to be developing a fresh character all its own recently (April and May issues), and the evolution looks very healthy. I'm becoming ever curious as to where the editorial inclinations lie. It's good to see the changes and the seemingly experimental approach — to my mind, the sign of a positive attitude to publishing.

Best wishes,
Mat Burns
London

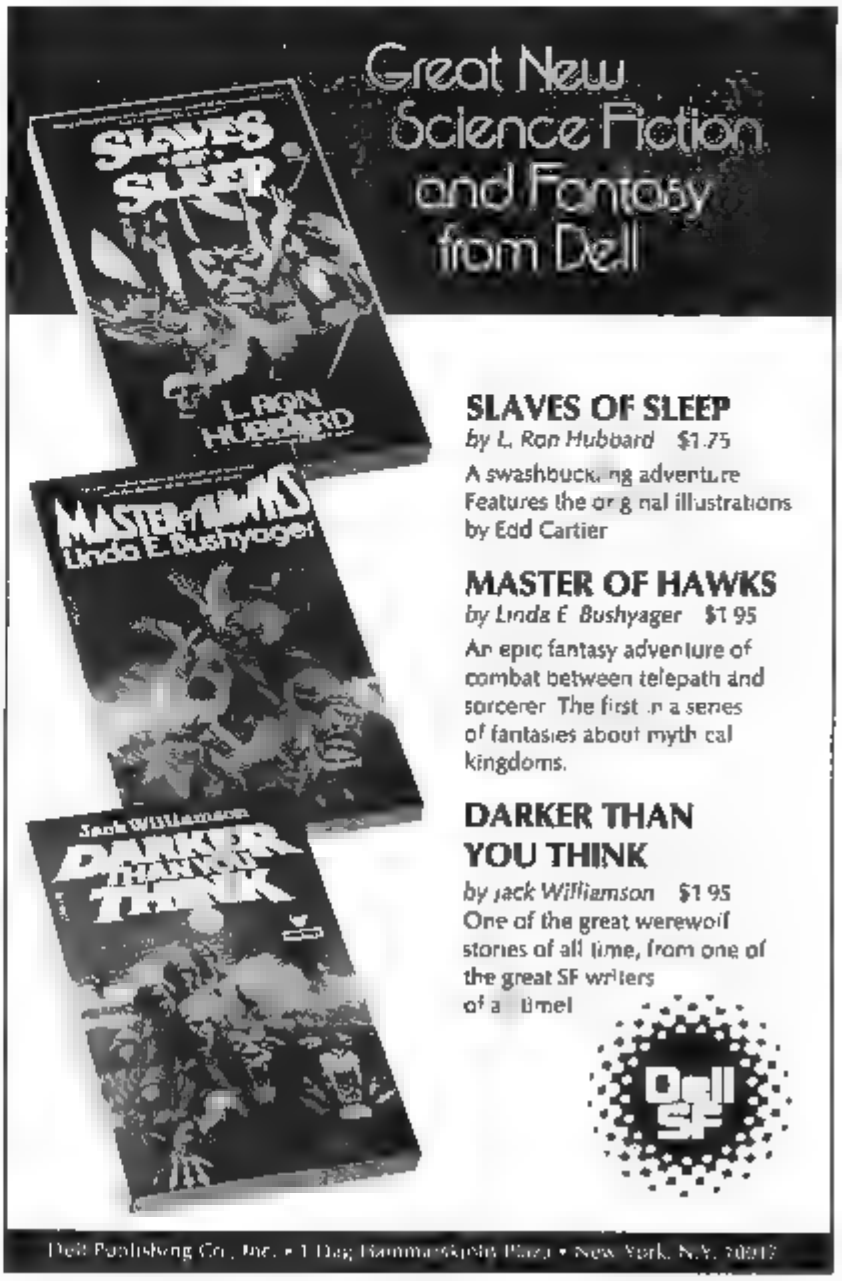
Dear *Heavy Metal*

Your magazine is the greatest publication I've had the opportunity to read in quite some time (THC and *Heavy Metal* are bred of the same magic). Generally speaking, the artwork and subject matter are fucking excellent.

Chuck Clawson
Pullman, Washington

Dear Chuck,

Our artwork and subject matter have nothing to do with fucking. Fucking is a different art form altogether. —The Eds.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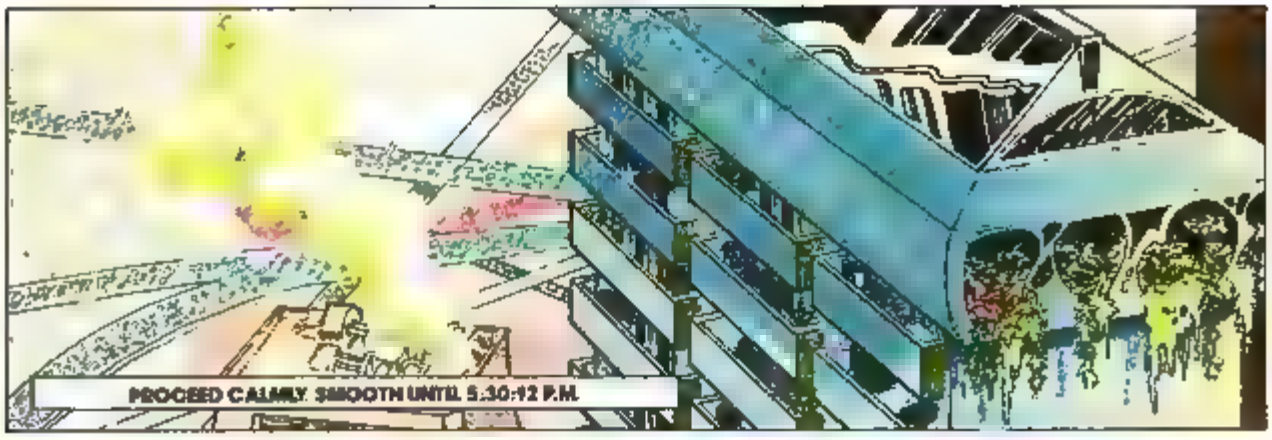
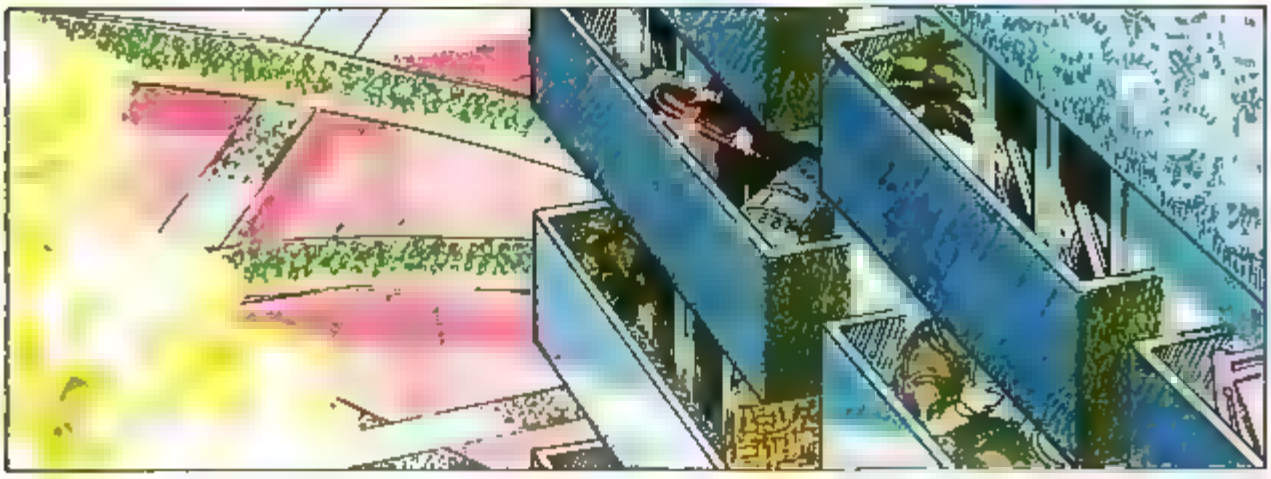
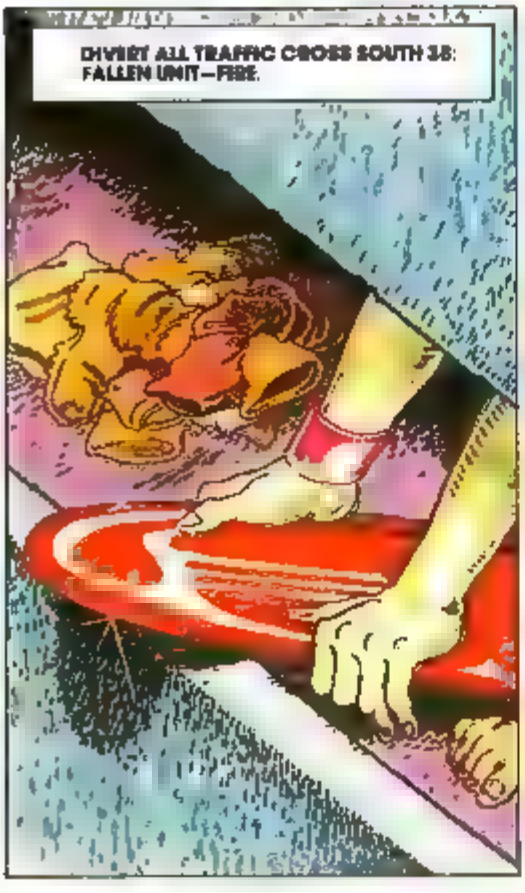
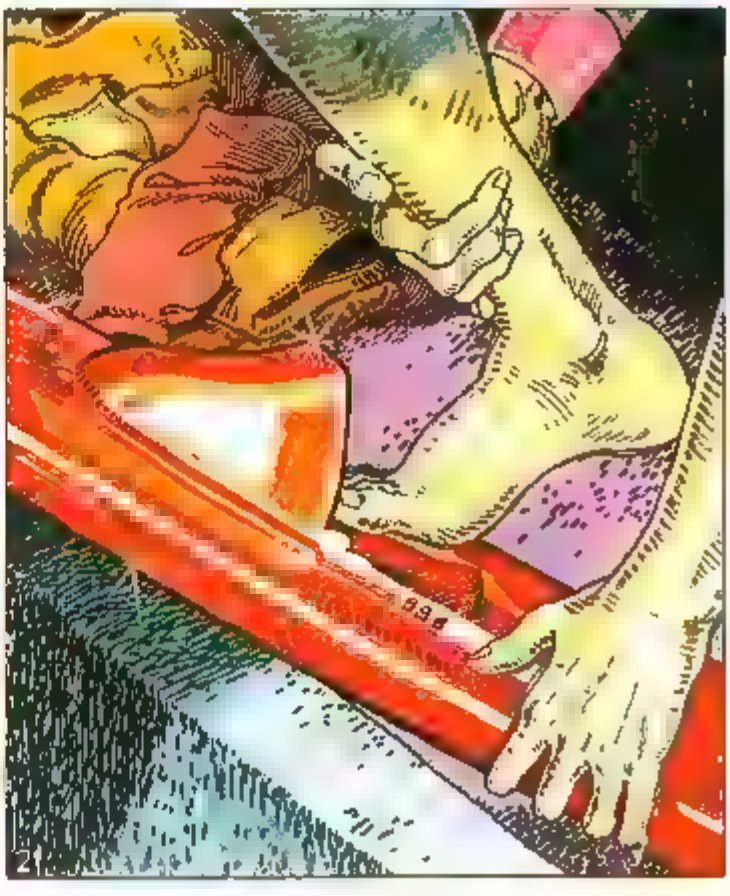
A STAR*REACH PRODUCTION


PROCEED CALMLY. SMOOTH UNTIL 5:30:12 P.M.

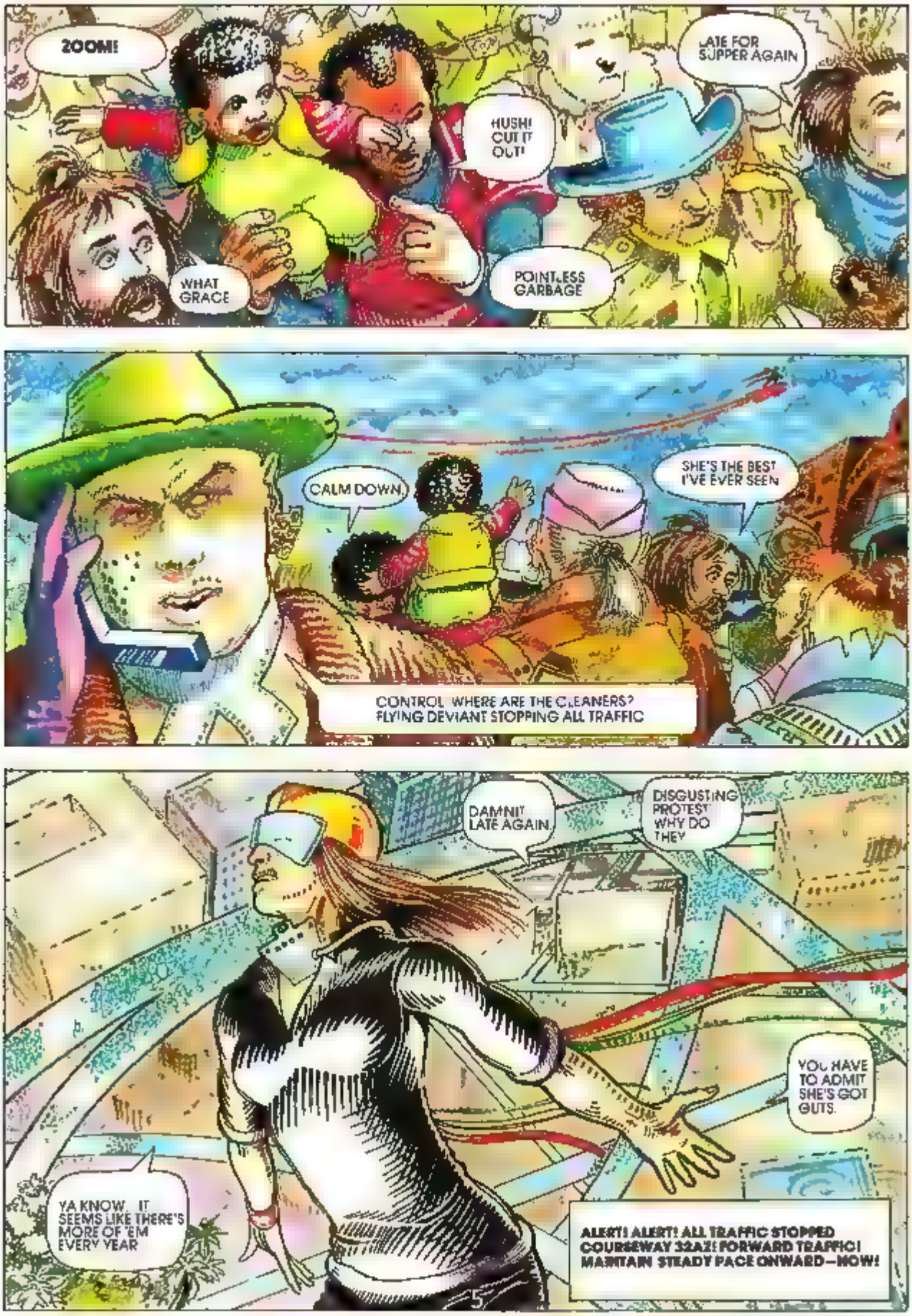


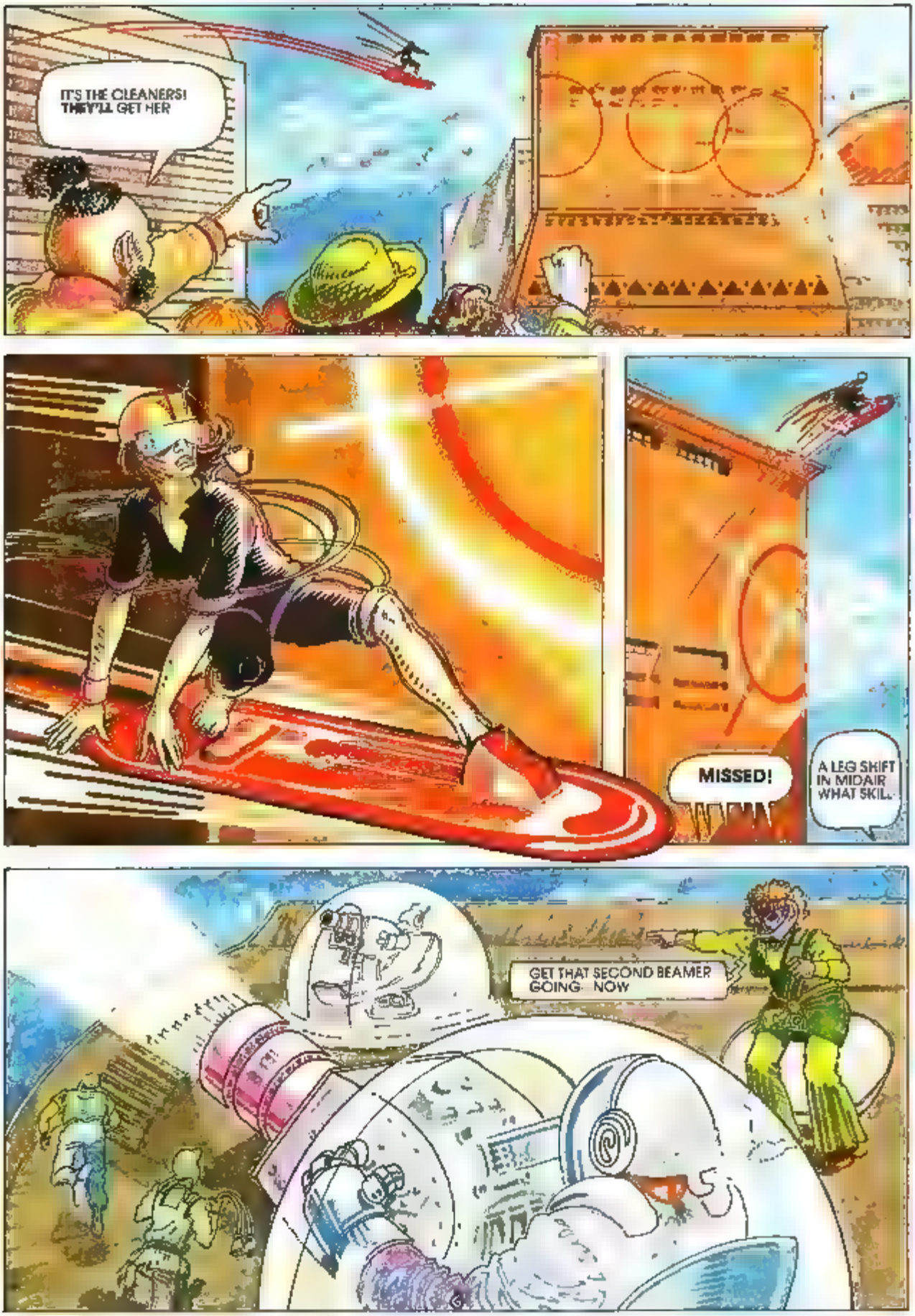

DIVERT ALL TRAFFIC CROSS SOUTH 35:
FALLEN UNIT—FIRE.

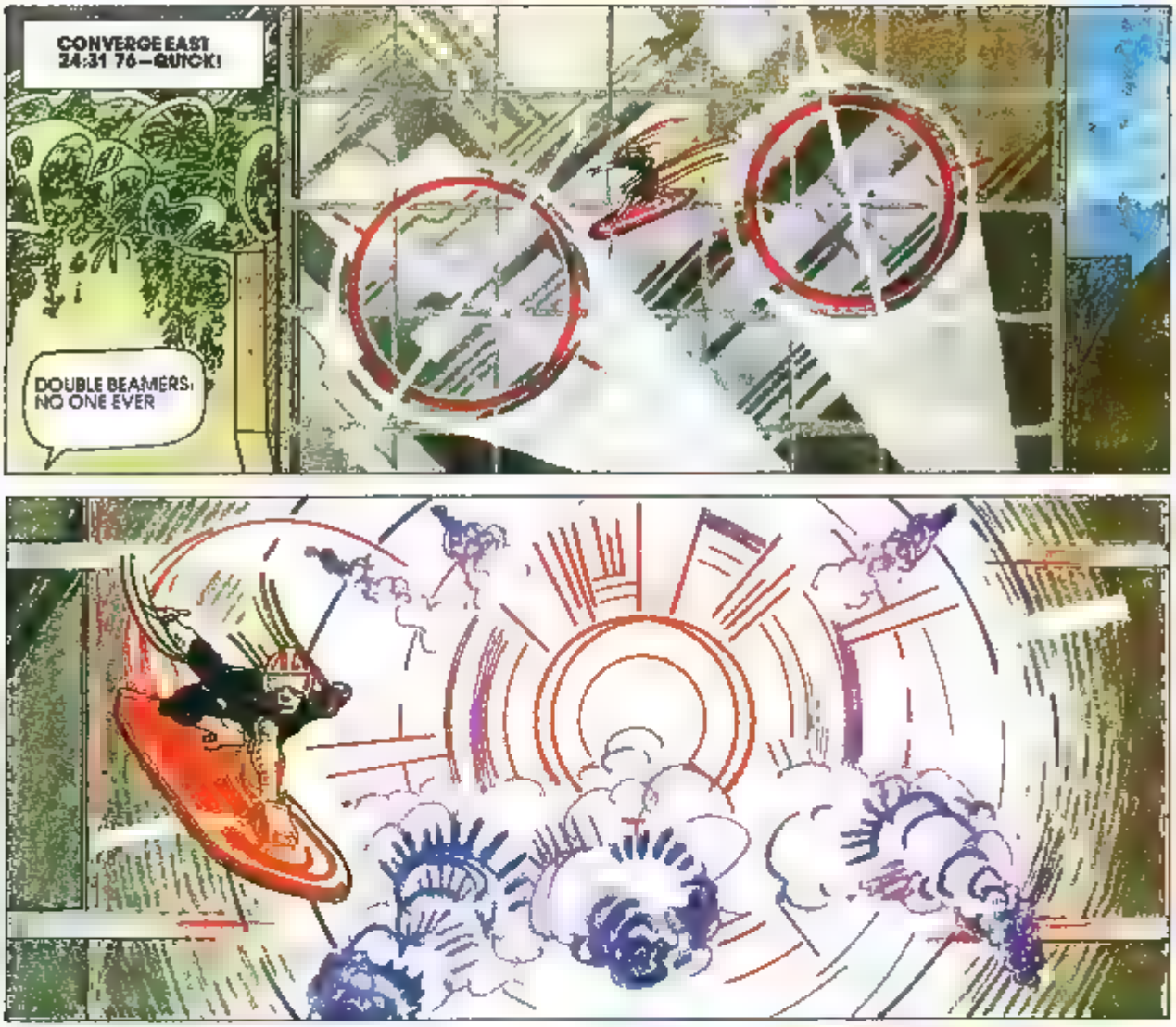


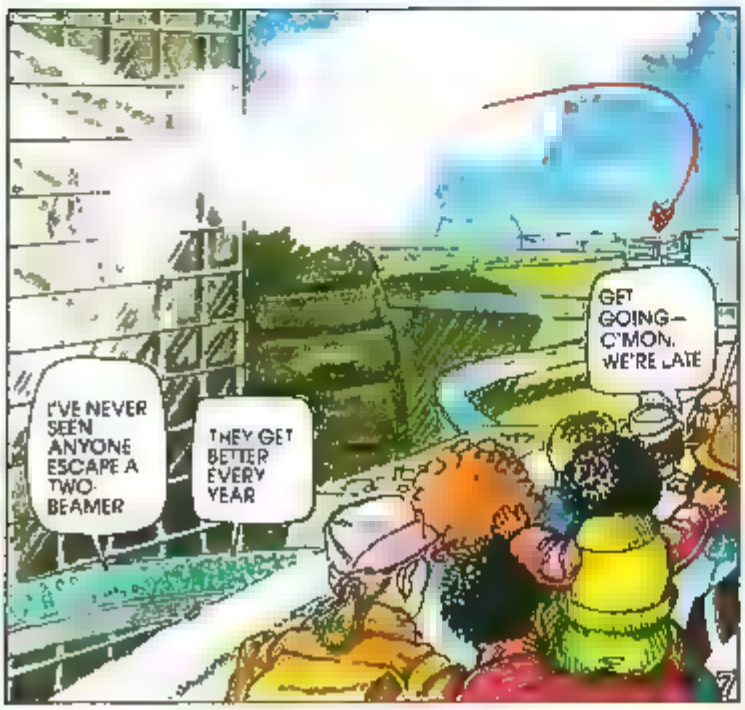
AAAAAAAAAAAHH!!
OH A FLYER
BEAUTIFUL
PLEASE PROCEED...

WATCH OUT!
BLASTED NTERFERING PERVERTS!
TRAFFIC STOPPED. PLEASE DIVERT TO WEST 522C.
NO!
LOOK, CITIZEN. WHAT IS THIS? ARE YOU A REVOLUTIONARY?
MOVE ALONG, COURSEWAY 32AZ. STEADY PACE ONWARD. MOVE, 32AZ.


ZOOM!
LATE FOR SUPPER AGAIN
HUSH! CUT IT OUT!
WHAT GRACE
POINTLESS GARBAGE
CALM DOWN.
SHE'S THE BEST I'VE EVER SEEN
CONTROL WHERE ARE THE CLEANERS? FLYING DEVIANT STOPPING ALL TRAFFIC
DAMN!! LATE AGAIN.
DISGUSTING PROTEST WHY DO THEY
YOU HAVE TO ADMIT SHE'S GOT GUTS.
YA KNOW IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S MORE OF 'EM EVERY YEAR
ALERT! ALERT! ALL TRAFFIC STOPPED COURSEWAY 32A2! FORWARD TRAFFIC! MAINTAIN STEADY PACE ONWARD—NOW!


IT'S THE CLEANERS! THEY'LL GET HER
MISSED!
A LEG SHIFT IN MIDAIR WHAT SKILL
GET THAT SECOND BEAMER GOING NOW


CONVERGE EAST 24:31 76—QUICK!
DOUBLE BEAMERS. NO ONE EVER


I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE ESCAPE A TWO-BEAMER
THEY GET BETTER EVERY YEAR
GET GOING— C'MON, WE'RE LATE

FLY SKY WHEEEE!
HUSH, IT'S ALL OVER
CONTROL TO BORDER: FLYING DEVIANT REACHING OUTER DIM. ACTIVATE LONG-RANGE SCAN. CONTACT DAMAGED TOWER.

ZOOM, LADY, ZOOM!
SHUT THAT KID UP YOU!
DON'T WANT TO HEAR ONE MORE WORD FROM YOU
MISSED MY SUPPER
JUST FORGET IT.
PROCEED SMOOTHLY PACE FORWARD NOW. ALL TRAFFIC FORWARD, PLEASE.
ZOOM, ZOOM, ZOOM!
SPECIALS ON FOODSTUFFS AT RIPPER CENTER—TONIGHT THROUGH FRIDAY, 5–9 P.M. SALES AT LAMPREY MALL UNTIL 9 P.M. TONIGHT
THE END

?
?!
?
WHIIIINNNNNNNEEEEE
?
?
?
?
!
!
6

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS YOUR MALL DIRECTOR SPEAKING!
THIS IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE MALL. I AM ADDRESSING ALL PERSONNEL EQUALLY AND I AM ASKING EACH ONE OF YOU TO STAY CALM
AHEM. THE WORST WE FEARED SEEMS TO HAVE AAH. COME TO PASS THE ENEMY HAS UTILIZED NUCLEAR ARMS
7

WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT PANIC YOU ARE, WE ARE, ALL, QUITE SAFE HERE
THE AUTOMATIC LOCKS ON THE BOMBPROOF DOORS ENGAGED AT 5 35
DEFENDER
MACHINE GUN
SCORE
WHICH INDICATES THAT THE LEVEL OF RADIOACTIVITY OUTSIDE IS RATHER HIGH FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE BUILDING
WE ARE ABLE TO GAUGE VERY LITTLE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE EXTERIOR
BUT OUR INSPECTION REVEALS THAT THE PILINGS WHICH SUPPORT THIS BUILDING ARE QUITE INTACT
?!
?!
8

WE CAN ONLY CONCLUDE WITH CERTAINTY THAT AN EXPLOSION TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE THE HALL.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE ARE IN THE MOST PERFECTLY CONSTRUCTED ANTI-ATOMIC BUILDING IN THE WORLD, RIGHT HERE
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR THIS BUILDING WAS DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE 15 000 OCCUPANTS FUNCTIONING AUTONOMOUSLY FOR ONE YEAR
AND, GIVEN THE LATE HOUR, OUR NUMBER MUST BE CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THAT!
?
?
?

YOU WILL APPRECIATE, THEN, THAT WE ARE IN AN ENVIABLE SITUATION. WE MAY WELL BE THE ONLY SURVIVORS LEFT IN OUR COUNTRY
OR AT LEAST IN THIS CITY!
!
WE WOULD ASK ALL VISITORS AND ALL EMPLOYEES, WHOEVER THEY MAY BE
TO GATHER TOGETHER IMMEDIATELY
?
IN THE MAIN HALL AUDITORIUM SO THAT WE CAN BEGIN THE CENSUS
REST ASSURED EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!
10

to be continued

SHERDOWN

As the warbot lowered itself into the forward gun dome Flan caught a muttered fragment " – fought more wars than he could ever name in schoo High and mighty – 'watch the rear' Think he knew a l about it "

Firing key in his fist, Flan Sunheart wa ted for the images to line up against the target spikes. Still out of v sual contact, the Grand Armada was an immense crescent whose tips were curving in to enfold the diamond Starbolt formation The first enemy launch was nearing him, though lower, on the Starbolt plane Flan ssued the go-command The ight fighters began to spit off from the diamond, crossing in front of each other as they fired a salvo of decoys. The targodrones would test enemy firepower and draw off most of ts missiles, hopefully, some of the demoprobes might be able to pierce the Armada shielding before detonating, weakening the force fields enough for the Starbolts to slip through

Movement on the screen!

More Armada ships were showing up, arcing up from Ilium's southern hemisphere – two additional crescents cutting across their path.

The *Omega Wing* shuddered as the first energy bo ts deflected against ts shield. A blaze of ight beyond the port and the garbled yammer in his ears told him the targodrones had all detonated prematurely, their vibro-mechan sms unable to withstand the Armada's force zone Bursts of nova brilliance lit up the space deeps, washing the Starbolts with sinister white light Lines of multicolored incandescence were coming from every point of the star-compass, targetting in on the wild y weaving Starbolts. Plugged into manual, scanner pressed against his chin, eyes at the viewer Flan cooly guided his ship between the deadly rays – at the same time trigger ng his own laser banks for extremely slow-pulse fire.

A flare of scarlet beneath him; the first Starbolt exploded in a shining of vaporized metal

His skull was being ripped apart! He tore off the comm.nicator Corona was beaming audio-rage signals! A man s brain could be turned to jelly by those sounds – but not before he might turn his guns on his comrades, and himself

◊ **three probes coming our way : : preset to home in on our transmission cycle : : : suggest we cease all inter-ship contact and blind in : : : i have also located lord corona's flagship : . a class a cruiser : : designate magna slag : : : it is the same one he utilized to blow up caeloran** ♦

At that moment,space was filled with howling missiles, vanes spread to catch the sunlight. More explos ons marked the death-sites of brave, loyal fighters, men he never would know who were dying – for him!

It was apparent that the intelligence received had been grossly inaccurate, if not altogether fa se Nekron Corona was mounting a max-k l attack – with no quarter to be given – against the outnumbered and outclassed Starbolts. There was no way the fighters could penetrate every Armada shield

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PART VI

Colored fire on the range scopes of the Omega Wing registers the enemy's presence. For Flan Sunheart the crowned head of the Galactic Federation those twinkling beads of light are reminders of the flaming towers of Ilium Prime, where his family perished.

The only survivor of the massacre of the Royal House of Sunheart, Flan is leading a contingent of starfighters against the vastly superior forces of Lord Nekron Corona.

By JOHN POCSIK

and destroy its ship. Reports grew more desperate, as first one and then another disappeared from the screens. For every Armada craft scored HIT or CRIPPLED, three Starbolts went plunging down into Ilium's yellowish haze.

Glancing to the rear, he saw bursts of fire which indicated that Commander Macronta's own flagship had come under attack and was slowing in its rearguard advance. There was no sign of the destroyers. Sunheart gritted his teeth: Mord's flyers were shelling the escape pods.

◊ **ware probes** ♦

Flan focused in, caught the infrared blur of a nose cone heading their way, and pressed the firing stud. The probe blew out of existence.

"Damage?" he asked tensely.

◊ **none : : : shall we back off** ♦

"Fix me on the *Magna Slag*. I'm going to make a run on the bastard's ship."

At once, the shape of Corona's flagship, bristling with guns, appeared along with coordinates and a tridim diagrammatic of possible weak points. Flan studied the picture for ten seconds.

Primary target – the warhead lockers; secondary – the fission unit next to the generation chambers.

The warbot thrust its sensor dome through the floor hatch.

"Flan – the bridge, just aft of the tower: that's the worst spot on these Class A ships. Two penetrex bore shells should do the job, if they can be aimed and fired right. They ought to pass completely through the *Slag*'s shield with a minimum of circuit damage at this speed."

Get ready then," Flan said grimly, feeling the rage build within him. He took the *Wing* higher, beyond the reach of the flyers, then began a steep descent back toward Corona's spaceship which bulked between him and the twin suns, a perfect target.

"Steady. Steady. PEW, take over. Hold her steady; don't mind anything else."

◊ **even if we get hit** ♦

"Especially if we get hit."

Blooms of light raced up and down the *Slag*'s length as her laser cannons began firing at the invader. Flan moved the stick a fraction, and the *Omega Wing* fell through space, weaving in and out of the light beam paths. The ship began to vibrate slightly from the first effects of sonoplasmic force, their own shield sensors were climbing rapidly toward OVERLOAD. The stick jerked in the youth's damp grip. Angrily, he wiped the beads of sweat from his eyebrows and leaned once more into the viewer.

"Steady."

The cross section of the *Slag*'s bridge, superimposed over its outline, grew larger by the second. He centered on the critical points of fire, locked on the control center, held.

'Steady."

But just as he depressed the firing key, the *Wing* bucked from a near-miss. The target on the screen slipped downward, out of sight.

Twin columns of radiant energy sped away, the projectiles heading for deep, unoccupied space.

Damn! He twisted in his chair, saw that four Starbolts were still behind him, trying to keep up. Corona's flyers were sweeping in.

Watch out!

Two of the ships went up in glittering debris, while the third and fourth peeled off at steep angles, heat beams slicing through the void.

"What now, Flan?"

"We're going to go in again."

"I admire your courage, boy," PEW responded, "but not your lack of sense. Our engines are in a bad way; unless we break off immediately, the success percentile of this mission will be reduced to zero."

The youth's fathomless eyes met the machine's expressionless lenses. His jaw firmed. Without another comment, the warbot extended its arms, screwing itself into the deck, combat-braced.

"Well, as ancient wisdom teaches – you can't live forever. Go, Sunheart."

"I'll see Corona in hell," the youth hissed, inserting the overburn program into the flight console. The stars blurred, changing into light streaks as the *Wing* accelerated toward hyperspeed – the one main advantage it had over other conventional warcraft.

Again Flan located the *Magna Slag*, now many sectars distant. In its haste to annihilate the Starbolts, the Armada had strung itself out, weakening its total shield power. Serene, confident and alone, the floating island-fortress awaited their coming.

The *Omega Wing* swept out of the stars once more, pale death flickering from the laser mouths, cluster tubes swiveling to blast at anything that emitted heat or energy. Flan laughed; racking explosions dotted the *Slag*'s bow, its metal skin peeling off in great, curling sections. His repeated salvoes had all but destroyed the protector drones.

HIT. HIT. HIT, the panels registered.

Keep it up, keep it up, he thought to himself as he targeted on the flag's bridge once again. Another bore shell dropped into the chute.

Flan made a slight course adjustment. The image jumped to the left and swung back.

The crash chair's coils tightened around him.

The *Omega Wing* came screaming in on a direct collision course.

Wait for it. Play the target.

He started to press the fire stud. . .

"They launched a torpon blast!"

The *Wing* heaved violently, slamming him back, knocking the breath out of him. The cabin lights dimmed and went out, replaced by the insistent crimson flash of the indicators.

WARNING. CRITICAL – EJECT.

WARNING. CRITICAL – EJECT.

WARNING. CRITICAL – EJECT.

The acrid stink of fusing metal and plastic filled the cockpit with choking fumes.

Flan strained to reach for the power shutoff, but could not move a muscle, because of

the acceleration force against him. The coils hummed, a painful weight was crushing the life out of him.

The wave blast had damaged the *Wing's* control systems, not only had he missed hitting the flagship, but now deflected by the *Slag's* shield, he was shooting away from the conflict at an ever-increasing uncontrolled speed.

Away from Corona!

He could not even close his eyes.

"PEW," he managed to croak. "PEW – can you shut us down?"

A terrible ringing assailed his ears as the engines whined in fury; unable to turn his head, Flan Sunheart could only watch helplessly as the blackness grayed toward the first tinges of infraspace.

Consciousness was leaving him! The *Wing* could not sustain hyperdrive for more than the few timed seconds most warp-jumps required.

The ship would tear itself apart.

The agonized shriek of the ion driver was the only reality.

His mouth was wide open; he was screaming too.

He heard.

3: THE SLAYER FROM THE DARK

No man knows its coming until it is upon him. Ageless and invisible, it has no boundaries and fears nothing. Few survive its attacks, and those who do are left nights of staring horror and an insane laughter which will never stop.

In the darkness, pain.

Rending, heartaching, the pain the planetless wanderer feels, for whom all landings have been forbidden.

The painful acknowledgment of the total loss of everything that has been familiar, known, and loved faces forever lost.

Pain, in the darkness.

PAIN!

The youth stirred fitfully, fighting back toward the dim surface of consciousness. Fire was ripping through every nerve, a harsh blue light flashing at the back of his skull. He shuddered, exhaling a great breath. His eyelids fluttered.

It was too much effort, too painful to move. The darkness sang to him.

Falling.

◊ flan : : flan : : wake up : : or i will give you another spinal : : : wake up : : : we are going to eat world this time for certain ♦

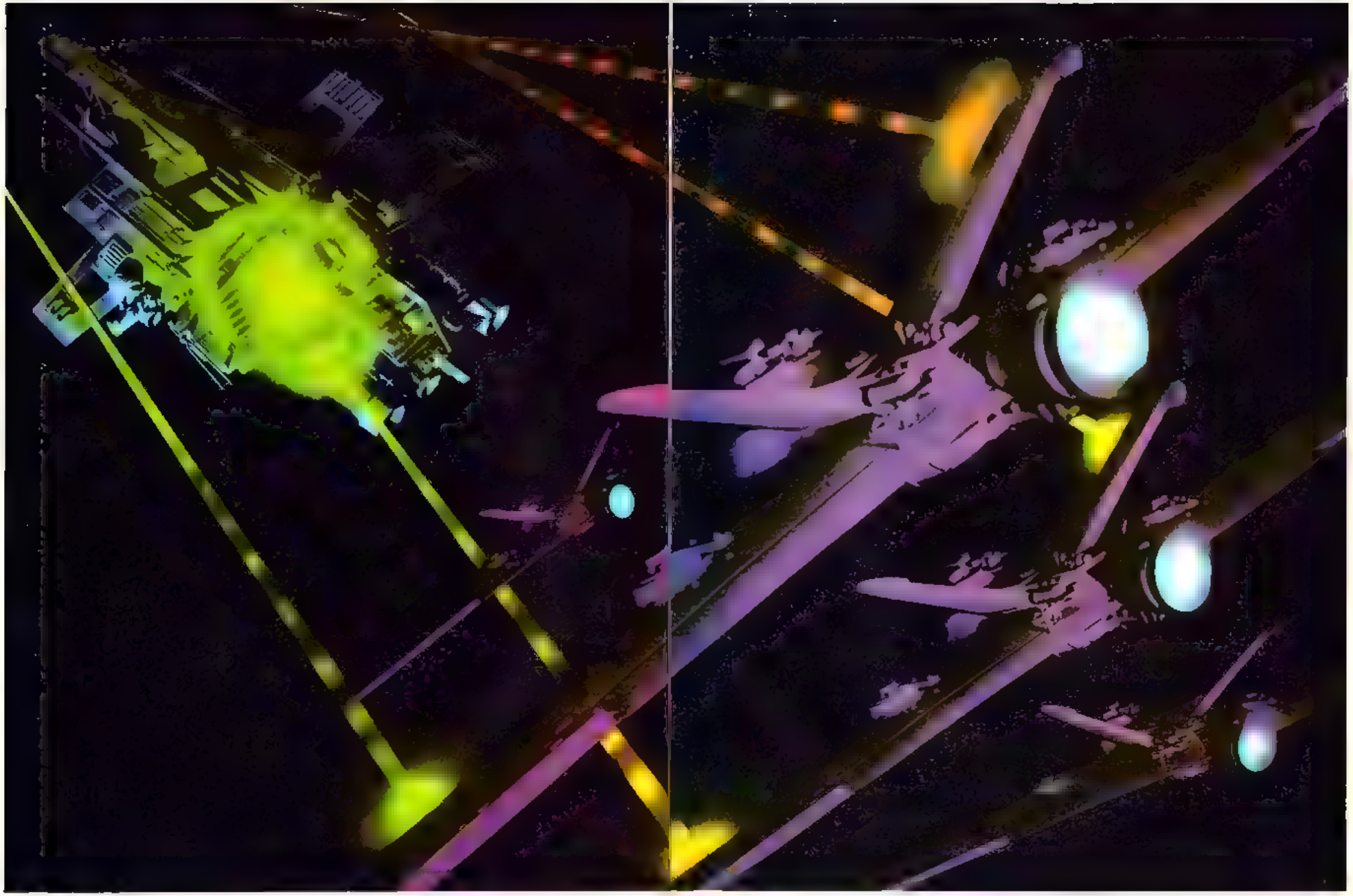
He tried to focus his vision. The cockpit was illumined by a strange soft radiance coming from outside the viewport. He struggled up, shattered coils tumbling off his lap. The crash chair was tilted, ripped entirely out of one deck socket.

"Good. I am relieved you are finally back with us," PEW hummed at him.

"What happened?"

"Take a look out there."

The light streaming in through the port was coming from an immense cloudy globe below them. Its shroudlike atmosphere swirled with somber muted earth colors – brown, blacks, sand, umber, tans – all flowing



together in a turbulent mix. Even as he watched, tremendous milky cloud forms surged up toward them, reaching impossible heights.

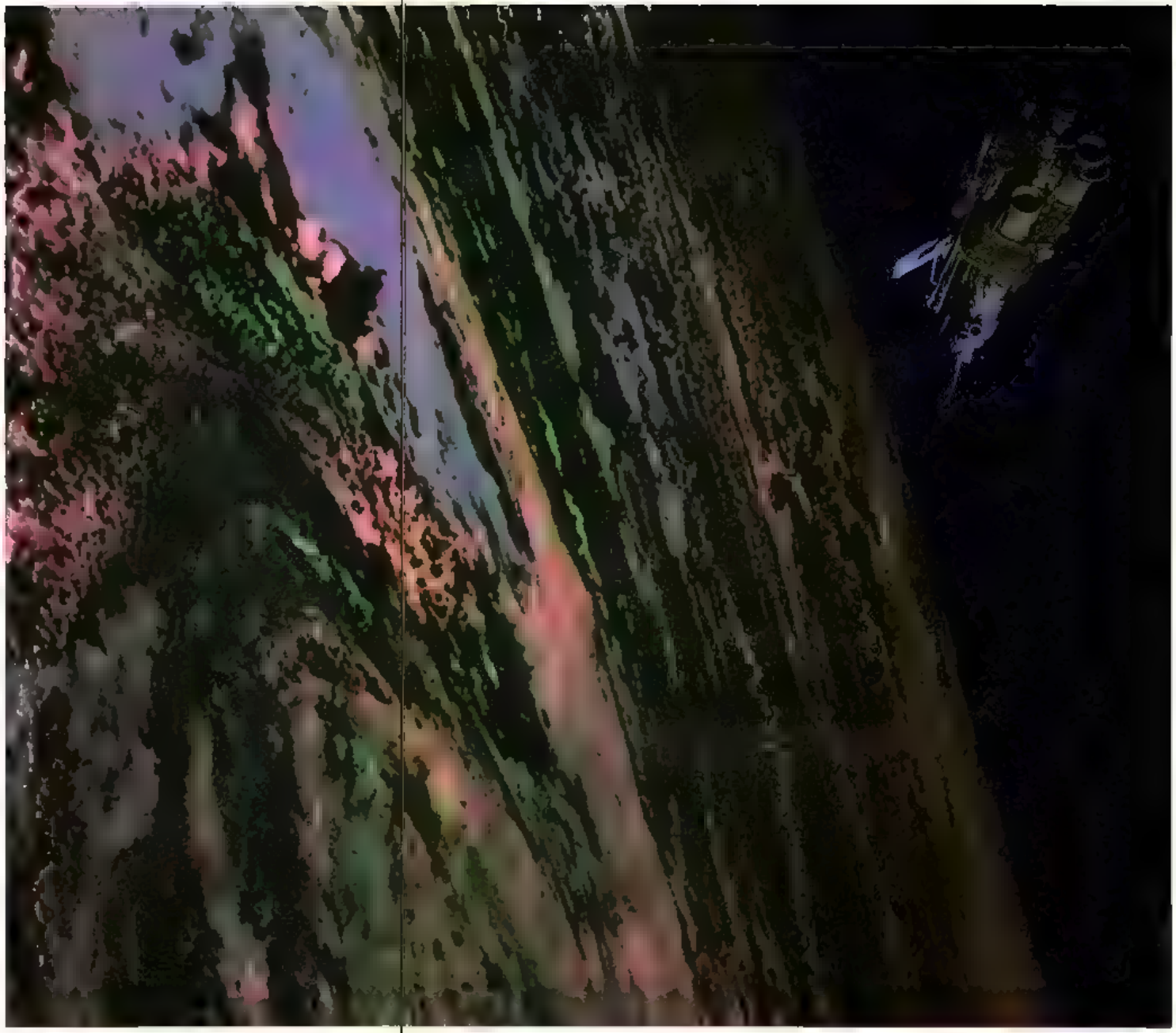
"Analysis, PEW. Atmospheric content? Gravity? Civilization?"

The globe swelled in size; they were falling, as if in a dream, toward a new world.

Flan checked the last navigational readout: still locked on Ilium coordinates. Reddish space outside, lit by a fading sun, gave no indication where in the galaxy they had wound up – if, in fact, they were still within the Whorl System. He checked the *Wing*'s instrumentation: most readings were still normal, although only half the power-reserve core was available for usage – barely enough to get them down.

"I need readings, PEW."

The warbot rolled over to the analyzer. "My Lord Flan the First enjoys a nap and leaves poor old PEW to do everything, as per usual. Wait a moment; I'll get what readings I can. Some of our exterior sensors were blasted off, you realize. A most didn't get this crate slowed down the way we were going, approaching the speed of light. We'd have bored right through this planet and come out the other side – a glowing gasball – before we knew we'd hit anything. Very interesting: the old physical problem – the immovable mass versus the irresistible object."



COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

HM #1/APRIL 1977: With Space Pants the first cruiser of Corben's Den and Bode's Sunpot an excerpt from the best-selling fantasy novel *The Sword of Sharnara*, Harzak and more! ($5.00)

HM #2/MAY 1977: Introducing Roger the paranoid muppet, Vargo the cosmic maiden, Rudolph astronauts, Conquering Aztecs, the unafraid rock festival while Harzak, Sunpot and Den continue ($4.00)

HM #3/JUNE 1977: Features Nginu images, poetry by Danish cartoonist Robert E. Howard with illustrations by Corben, Macedo's Rocketeer, the highly praised Druid, the first chapter of Bilal's World Adam, more Den, Sunpot, and Harzak ($3.00)

HM #4/JULY, 1977: It is must for Moebius fans, with 2 pages of Harzak and has a full size story! The Long Tomorrow, also the end of Sunpot, further adventures of Den the psychic Rap Brad and the horrible Gold Queen ($3.00)

HM #5/AUGUST 1977: In which the saga of Polonius begins. The Long Tomorrow concludes, World Adam and Den continue, all amidst talking plants, samurai cyppelis, sex, and violence! ($3.00)

HM #6/SEPTEMBER, 1977: Galactic Aztecs, cosmic cowboys, hysterical shaddery, chemically-induced lancy, a Moebius space opera, Weird World Adam, Dark and Polonius play a Roger Zelazny short story! ($3.00)

HM #7/OCTOBER, 1977: Packed with knights, ladies, jet pilots, insanity, reincarnation, and other harmless pastimes. 10 pages of color Moebius, the Airtight Garage, Den, and Polonius redux, and fiction by Theodore Sturgeon! ($3.00)

HM #8/NOVEMBER, 1977: With nine color pages by Moebius and Rembaud, the conclusions of both Polonius and World Adam, ex-pugs, intellectual mutilators, birth and death plans, and a great new Harlan Ellison story... this heavy is Heavy Metal! ($3.00)

HM #9/DECEMBER, 1977: This time we're up to 104 pages to bring you the complete saga of Druillet's anti-hero, Yuzz, a chapter from Close Encounters of the Third Kind, and Fortune's Fool by Chaykin and Wein, in addition to full-color continuing story regulars, Corben, Macedo, Cavelluk and Moebius! ($3.00)

HM #10/JANUARY, 1978: We get Morrow to illustrate Zelazny, and get Lob and Richard to update Ulysses, we get Meehan to do a Heavy Metal calendar girl, we concluded Conquering Amazons, and continued Den. Oh crumbs, you know about the heavy, big lights, and the time warp! ($3.00)

HM #11/FEBRUARY 1978: Whereas began the new adventures of Barbarella, revved to her enemies, and rose to her friends, and of Jim the Fool on his quest for revenge. Wraparound cover and stories sponsored by Bleep. A fling to Venus, the Crusader and the Witch, and Moebius down the rabbit hole. With the usual unusuals. Rat Den! ($3.00)

HM #12/MARCH, 1978: In which we learn the ends of watch hands and the perils of wristwatch. The problems of mass transit, and the dangers of hitchhiking. Plus, the first swashbuckling episode of Druid. More Barbarella. More Den. And still more Den! ($3.00)

HM #13/APRIL, 1978: Big deal! first anniversary issue with 30-page insert from Paradise II by all occasional Algo, defeat the long must die death a duel, and the shaggy, Elephantis guest both Oh, and the second Moebius epilogue to Den! ($3.00)

HM #14/MAY 1978: Does Jim the Mad locate El Dorado, goes to pieces on a bicycle, buys a cannibal clock, loses jewels, and completely lap-dampers with Nina. Not to mention Orion and Barbarella! ($3.00)

HM #15/JUNE 1978: This time we go looser. For instance the exotic new Corben, Chahnelair, the neurotic Evolution, the acclaim More Than Human, the erotic Starbreaks, and the graphic Them Changes. And an excerpt from Salbec and the origins of Heatman! ($3.00)

HM #16/JULY 1978: A happy ending to Barbarella, a sad ending to 1998, the resurrection of Dejakkis Qal, the further adventures of Heatman and Orion, More Than Human contd, and another piece of the Arabian Nights tale from Corben! ($3.00)

HM #17/AUGUST, 1978: Looks like more of the same, with Orion, Corben's Arabian Nights, Heatman, and the first More Than Human. Except Druillet's Gail gets going again, the Off-Season starts, cannibal robots get exorcised, and somebody finally touches the right button! ($3.00)

HM #18/SEPTEMBER, 1978: Starring Sindbad the Sailor, Empress Queen of the Bubble Women, the Major's fiancee, two off-season seasons, Alcazar the Warrior Magician, Orion and Long Snake on Ice, Harlan Ellison's newest full of bad-ass. Plus miscellaneous gags and wheezes! ($3.00)

HM #19/OCTOBER, 1978: All Hallows breaks loose with an excerpt from Dawn of the Dead, the publicity rays of disgrace, a zombie-packed pulled Exterminator, Ellison's Glass Goblin illustrated, and the return of Nicho's So Beautiful and So Dangerous. More done in replay of heroes, Sindbad, Qal, and Orion! ($3.00)

HM #20/NOVEMBER, 978: A full 20-page excerpt from the Chaykin Delany *Empire*, while Sindbad's dragon explodes, the Exterminator escapes, Stalag outlaws end, the Sad Man disappears, Gruberi arrives too late, and Heatman is reborn for the final time. So Beautiful and So Dangerous, part two, and more Diabolical Planet! ($3.00)

HM #21/DECEMBER 1978: Pulsing the Eddie turkey back into Xmas and wrapping up Orion and Old Season with Jumpin' Tarot greeting cards, wreaths and wreaths, crackers, crackers, and a preezy for you, a 12-page Moebius murder yarn! ($2.00)

HM #22/JANUARY, 1979: This one's full of elephants, for some reason. Plus the first Time, and a group jump and Gail's shoot-em-up finale. Some decapitation, a space worm, and the ground rules over the ship. More Mickey and Corben. What's up, man? ($2.00)

HM #23/FEBRUARY 1979: Our February festivities debuted the debut of the big of the Starstruck. We continue with Sindbad and Mickey's So Beautiful and So Dangerous. More Moebius and Bilal. Macedo brings us chapter four of the Metropolis, and by popular demand, Galactic Geographic. Thump the story of a star-nosed mole and much, much more! ($2.00)

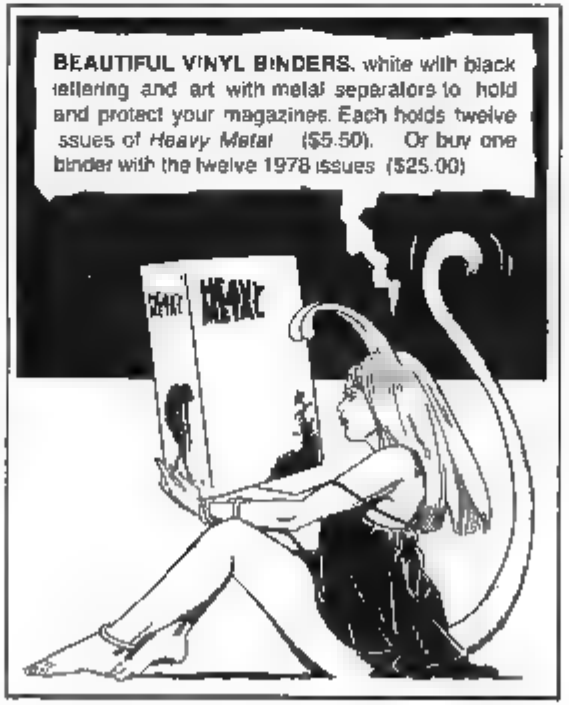
HM #24/MARCH, 1979: Twenty pages of Chaykin's shocking Stars My Destination for openers. A punk rumble, encore no. none, Heavy Hs. Star Crown II, and Bilal's late show. Also the where and when from ($2.00)

HM #25/APRIL, 1979: Sincere comedy dash with Chaykin's great new Gideon Faust tale, an Arch portfolio, Val Mayerik's Time Out, the first chapter of Python, fiction by Arthur Cover, ghost ships, robotic miscegenation, and other goodies for you. ($2.00)

HM #26/MAY, 1979: The demon all American issue with fifteen plate-page entries including part one of The Russ and Allen, the complete Emergent, a new Gray Morrow, and more of Corben's Sindbad. (Except for Druillet's Draco and a Prayer) pole. ($2.00)

HM #27/JUNE 1979: From the guys who brought you the pompadour, Charles De Gaulle, and bikini blackjack... we proudly present 54 pages of the wild and wacky adventures of Captain Future Plus. The weapon episode of the illustrious Allen McKay's psychic vision of Mick Jagger in the year 2000, Python (not to be confused with Jaws II and Pippi Longstocking Meets the Werewolf), and also the final episode of So Beautiful and So Dangerous (Why, we hardly know you) ($2.00)

HM #28/JULY, 1979: Vaughn Bode's Zoota Harmony Monroe's Eight Balls and Moebius's Garage capture the sun and curtains down on Corben and Sunbird's New Tales of the Arabian Nights. Guest appearances include Neal Adams's Repo de Ugly Green Head and Corben and Courtney's Night on Bald Mountain. Bravo! Bravo! ($2.00)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A Meeting of Civilizations

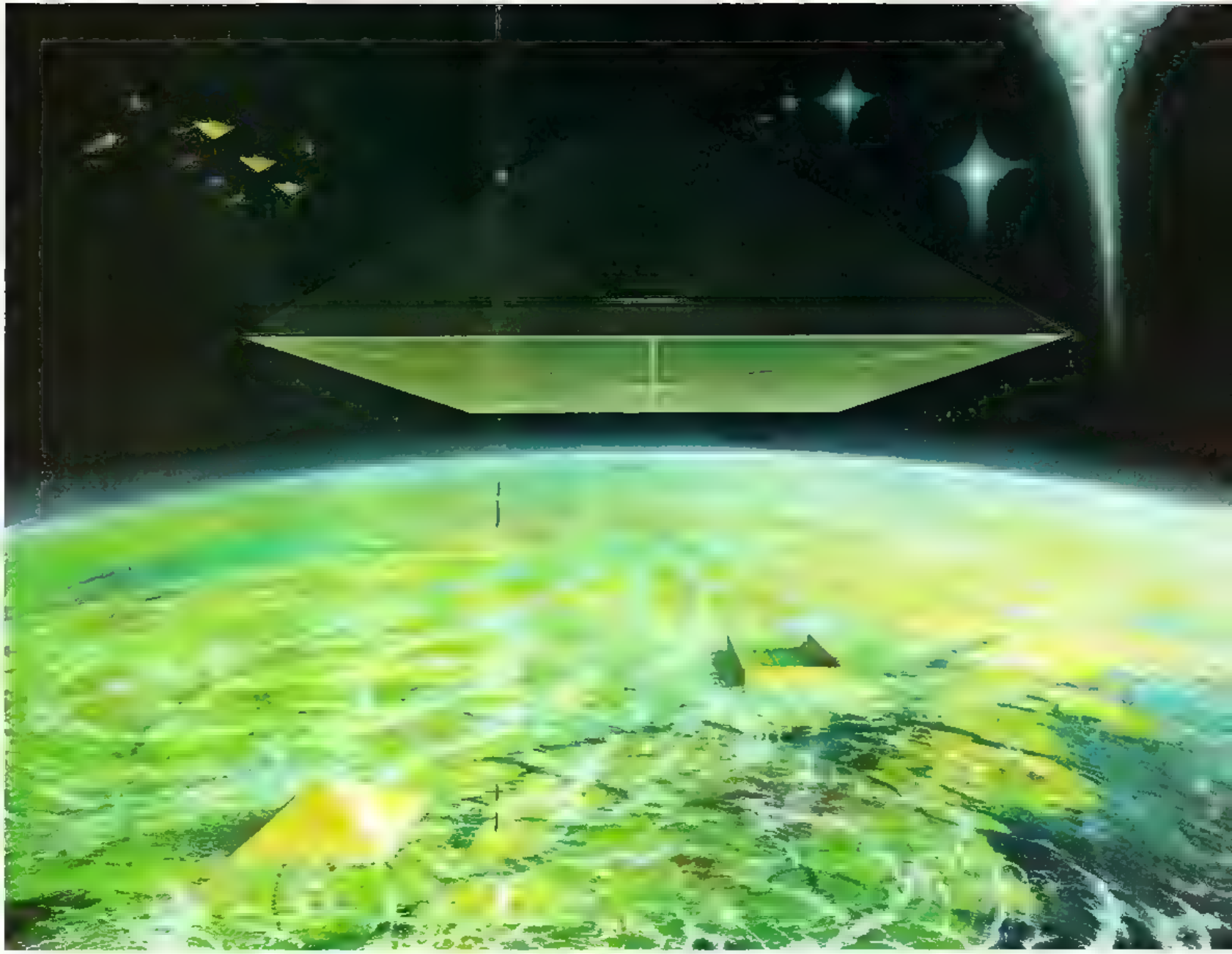
Poised above a planet bathed in noonday sun, a stationary WO ark awaits its civilization's first encounter with our Federation fleet in this view from GGO cruiser *Garcia*

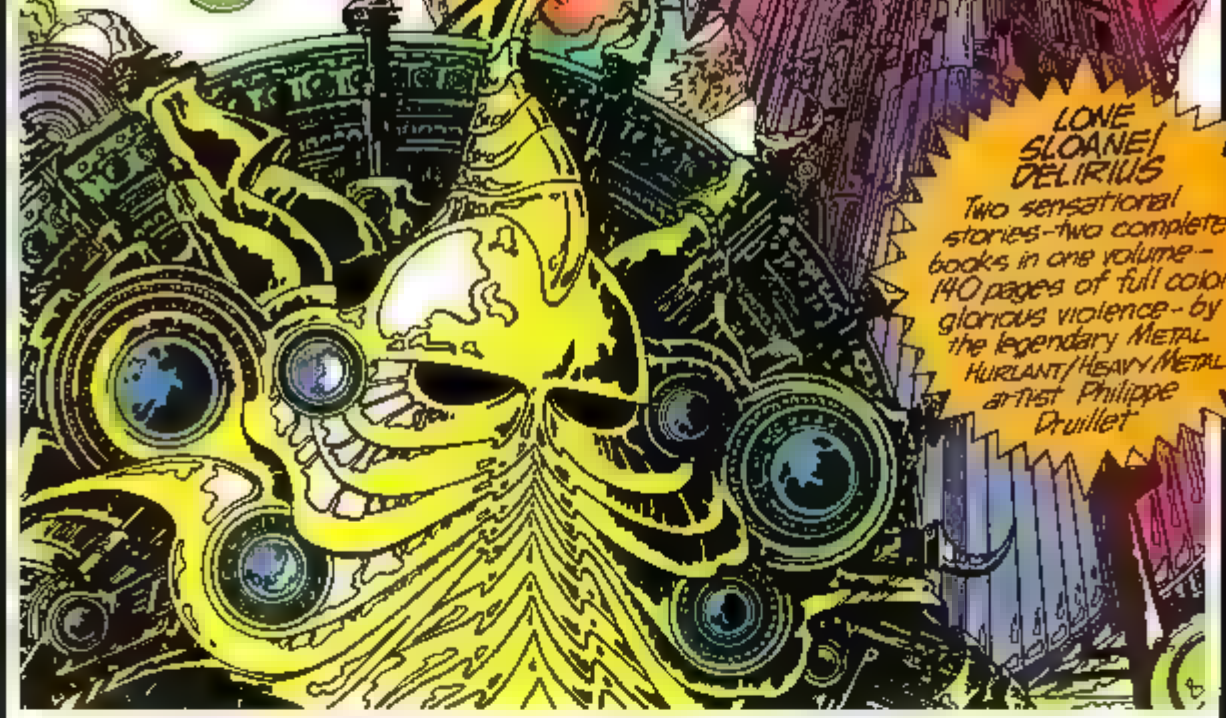
Our delegation groups to one side, awaiting the arrival of slower Noron vessels still many hours away. The excitement aboard ship is palpable, as we will soon be completing one more link across the vista of space. For weeks of our journey of almost eight hundred light-years, we have been monitoring welcoming WO transmissions and taking a crash course in WO civilization and technology. Nothing, however, could have prepared us for the vastness and magnificence of their pyramidal ark, almost a world unto itself, which will serve as our meeting place and home for many months. Its huge, boxlike launching bay, lying empty, even of atmosphere, is seen on the surface below, near a sister ship.

The WO hospitality is as vast as their planet, as evidenced by the precisely placed beacons that delineate the route to the ark. We originally perceived the beacons as monitors or scanners, but our instruments did not confirm this. For us, caution has always been a companion to curiosity. Here, a new civilization, whose accomplishments include harnessing their sun's total energy output, openly awaits us, with a graciousness almost as alien and unexpected as their world.

And now we come together: Earth, Tsailerol, Noron and WO.

From the *Stellar Journals of Karl B. Kofoed*





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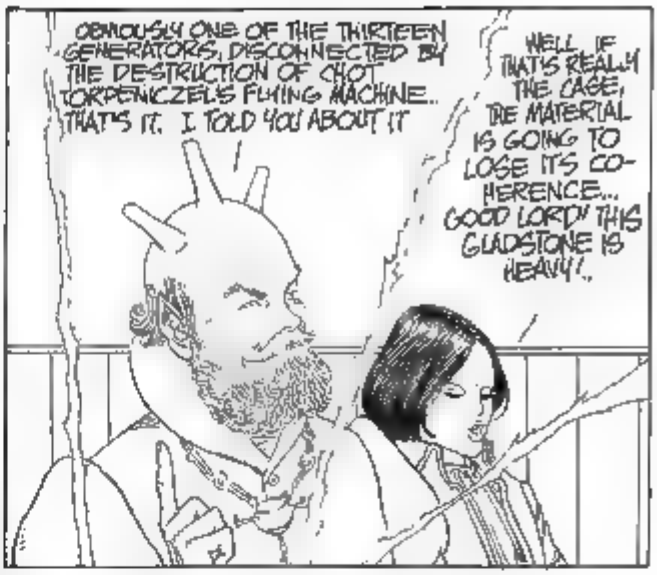
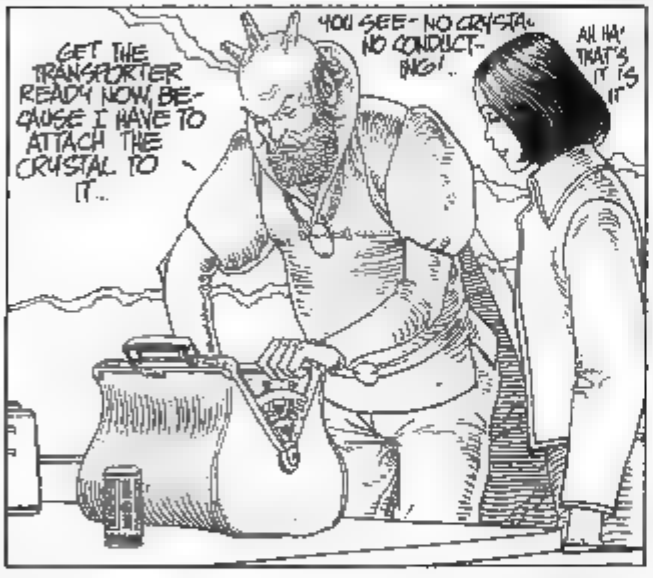
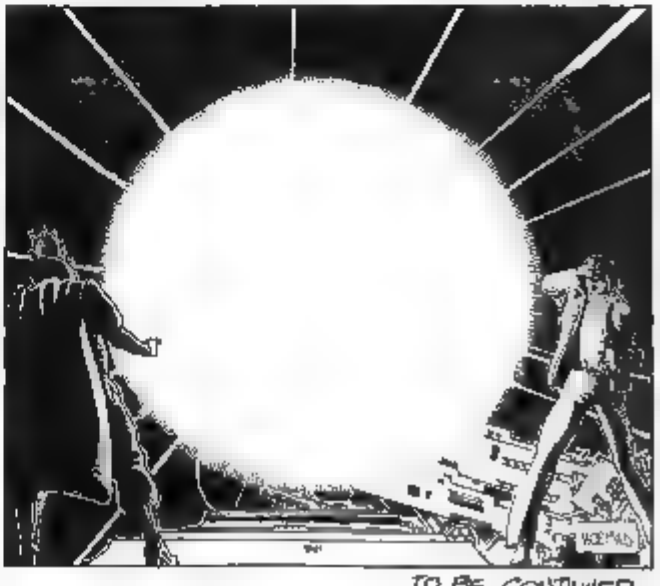
HELLO JASPER TO CORNELIUS! WAX CRACKS APPEARING IN THE PLASMA WEB
HAVE YOU LOST FAITH IN YOUR MASKED GUIDE, ENGINEER?
WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE! I CAN FEEL IT!
THERE! IT'S HAPPENED! THIS IS IT! WHAT IF THEY STORM THE PLACE.. WHAT IF THEY BRING THE MAJOR BOUND IN CHAINS


OBVIOUSLY ONE OF THE THIRTEEN GENERATORS, DISCONNECTED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF CHOT TORPENICZEL'S FLYING MACHINE.. THAT'S IT. I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT
WELL IF THAT'S REALLY THE CASE, THE MATERIAL IS GOING TO LOSE ITS CO-HERENCE... GOOD LORD! THIS GLADSTONE IS HEAVY!..


GET THE TRANSPORTER READY NOW, BE-CAUSE I HAVE TO ATTACH THE CRYSTAL TO IT..
YOU SEE - NO CRYSTAL NO CONDUCT-ING!..
AH HA! THAT'S IT IS IT

NOTE TO THE READER LOOK.! THE MAJOR IS BREATHING DEEPLY FROM HIS ABDOMEN AND THE TIPS OF HIS FINGERS COMPLETELY CONSCIOUS OF EVERYTHING HAPPENING AROUND HIM. HE CONCENTRATES MORE DEEPLY STIL- ON CERTAIN CODES OF THE CELLULAR STRUCTURE. HIS CORPOREAL SHELL SEEMS TO DISSOLVE A LUMINOUS POINT CREATES ITSELF IN THE DEPTHS OF HIS CONCENTRATION.. THIS LUMINOUS POINT GROWS UNTIL IT OVERWHELMS HIM WITH ITS TOTAL SPLENDOR.



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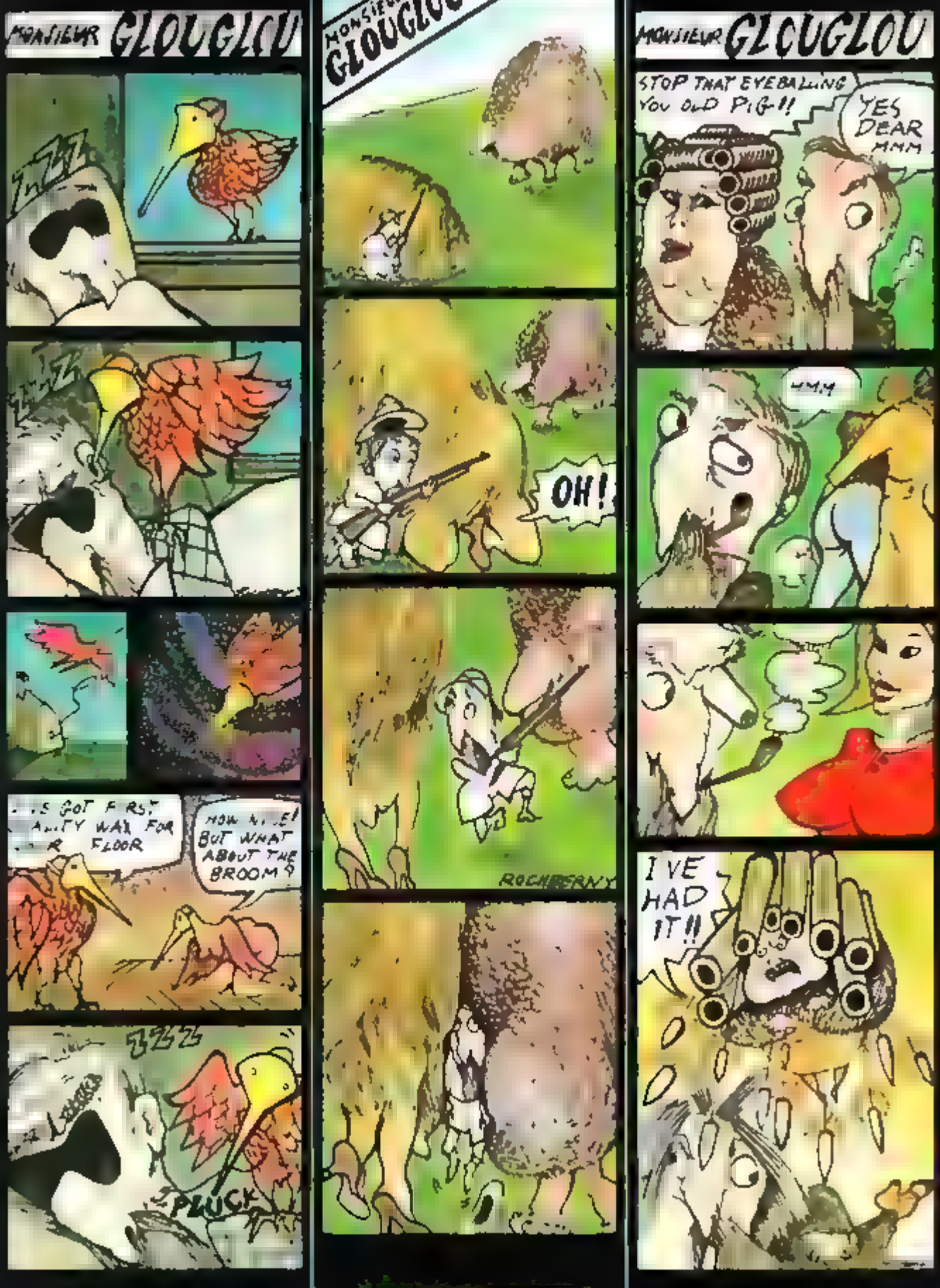

MONSIEUR GLOUGLOU
ZZZZ
MONSIEUR GLOUGLOU
OH!
ROCHERNY
MONSIEUR GLOUGLOU
STOP THAT EYEBALLING YOU OLD PIG!!
YES DEAR MMM
MMM
HOW NICE! BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BROOM?
I'VE HAD IT!!
ZZZZ
PLUCK

ZOOKS!

©by VAUGHN BODE

SEE SUNFLOWER. DAT'S TWA SECOND TIME YOU HAS WRECKED UP DIS WEEK. WOT DA TROB?
WELL, DOC BEANBAG, I IS A LITTLE APPREHENSIVE BOUT DIS ORBITAL FLIGHT I GOIN TO MAKE MY RAZOR LIKE TWAIN'S OFFA HAIR.
I THINKS YOU MEAN YOU IS A LITTLE CHICKEN.
AWH NO. I SA LITTLE LIZARD, CHICKENS GOT FEATHERS AN LIKE DAT...
©1970 VAUGHN BODE
YOUSE BETTER MAKE SURE YOU DONE EVERYTHING YOU GOTTA DO. (IF YOUSE KNOWS WOT I MEAN.) WE GOT TO GET YOU INTO DA SPACE SUIT
UHM. CAN I, AHH... HAVE ANOTHER RHUBARB SANDWICH? MAN, I JUS' DIGS RHUBARB ON BREAD WIF ALL MY HEART
LISTEN, SUNFLOWER, I WANTS TO MAKE DIS PERFECTLY CLEAR, YOU IS TO GO FOR 3 ORBITS ONLY, WE DON'T KNOW HOW SPACE EFFECTS BZARDS.
HOW BOUT IF I DON'T GO AT ALL. I'LL JUS' MAKE UP WHAT YOU WANTS TO KNOW AN TELL YOU...

SGT SUNFLOWER, YOU IS ACTING AWFUL NERVOUS BOUT DIS FLIGHT...

LOOK, NO LIZARD EVER HAD DA BAD LUCK TO GO INTO ORBIT BEFORE EGH, I FEELS KINDA SICKISH..

LAVENDER DUNE TRANSFER VAN

POLYMOG

MUST BE DA FIVE RHUBARB SANDWICHES YOU ATE IN DA LOCKER ROOM...

NOPE, IT MORE A LIGHT, FLUFFY FEATHERY FEELIN.

AHH, YOU ADMIT YOU IS TURNIN' CHICKEN!

ALL I KNOWS IS MY DRUMSTICKS IS SHAKIN'...

PWA

OKAY, SUNFLOWER, LAD, YOU THINKS YOU CAN MANAGE DA LADDER ALL RIGHT? OUR SPACE BUDGET DOESN'T GOT NO ROOM FOR FRIVOLITIES.

I WISH IT DIDN'T EXIST. I CAN MANIPULATE DA STUPID LADDER IF SOMEBODY HAUL UP MY LUNCH PAIL.

WELP, HERE IT'S, PUMPKIN BALL... IT GOING TO BE YOUR HOME FOR 3 ORBITS AROUND OUR WORLD ..HOW I DO ENVY YOU SERGEANT

AF

I TELLS YOU WHAT, YOU DOESN'T HAS TO ENVY ME, DOC. I'LL LET YOUSE GO IN MY PLACE ANY DAY...

"JUS' SHUTUP AN STRAP IN...

WE GONNA LOWER DA HATCH CLOSE. SUNFLOWER, DIS IS A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR ALL LIZARDS.

WOTS? CLOSING A HATCH? .HOWS DAT HISTORICAL? .MILLIONS OF HATCHES CLOSE EVERY-DAY I WANNA GET OUT..

To Be Continued..

Illustrations by Joseph Zucker

DRAGONWORLD

by Byron Preiss

and J. Michael Reaves

HEAVY METAL

It was well after midmorning when Johan, son of Jondalrun stood on the edge of the cliffs and looked out over the Strait of Balomar. He wiped damp, blond curls from his forehead and shaded his eyes against the sunlight. Johan was tired; he had begun the climb in predawn darkness, carrying the Wing tenderly as he made his way across the bushy hills to the northern escarpment. Even with his care, the stretched leather surface and wooden frame of the Wing had been scratched by hookberry vines and sharp rocks. The last part of the climb had been the steepest, and the sea winds there had made the Wing jump and buck like a stallion. Yet Johan had presevered. He intended to fly this day, and he would settle for nothing less.

The boy now sat upon a hugh rock, having carefully anchored the Wing behind it. He ate a nectarine pulled from his father's garden, and gazed up at the foamy clouds as the breeze dried the juice on his cheeks.

He was a farmer's son, young but strong and limber. The friendly wind played with his hair, tickling strands against his face. Johan hugged himself as much in delight at his daring as against the slight chill of the Pandoran spring. His father, Jondalrun, would be angry. Risking safety for pleasure was a silly, Simbalese thing to do. But Johan had seen Amsel one beautiful morning, drifting above these very clouds, soaring as free as a fabled dragon, and he knew that to fly was far more than pleasure and truly worth the risk.

Taking the Wing had been easy. The great tree that formed part of Amsel's house rose up next to Greenmeadow Mesa, and its massive upper branches grew flush with the cliff's edge. Johan had simply walked onto the tree, descended to the limb where the Wing was kept, and left with it by the same route. He cautioned himself against falling into the easy habit of thievery. Just this once, and never again.

He was rested now, and the nectarines were all eaten, and there would be no better time for flying. He carried the Wing with him to the cliff's edge. A hawk sailed by far below him, close to the cliff's face, wings motionless. Wait for me, Johan thought. Hawk, I'll show you flying.

Standing at the edge, he carefully aimed the Wing into the wind. As the leather flapped and boomed in the updraft, he gripped the steering bar beneath the frame and slipped his feet into the thong loops, as Amsel had once shown him. That done, he stood facing the ocean, far below. For the first time, he felt cold fear spreading under his heart. What if flying was not as easy as it looked? But it was too late now. The weight of the frame pulled him forward, and he could only push with his feet and turn a sudden descent into an awkward leap. Sea air slapped his cheeks, and he cried out in terror. He was falling! Amsel's invention had failed, and Johan prayed that he would not die. Eyes squeezed shut, he twisted his body desperately this way and that, and after an eternity, felt air catch beneath the leather sail. Suddenly, he was not falling but rising. He opened his eyes—a cloud of indignant gulls exploded about him, protesting his invasion. He was flying!

Held aloft by the laughing wind Johan experimented with his body weight, learning the rules of flight Mastery came swiftly as he flew over the water The sheer beauty of it! Johan had known little more in his eight years of life than plowing and sowing, harrow and harvest This was totally new, this was wonderful! Air burned sweetly in his lungs, then exploded from his lips in a shout of delight as he swooped and circled

As the first euphoria faded, Johan began to study the scenery below. He was hovering in a steady updraft just over the vertical cliffs The Strait of Balomar separated his land, Fandora, from the dim purple shoreline to the east Through the mists above this shore was Simbala, home of the mysterious and disrobed Riders of the Wind.

On his rare days of play, Johan would often come to the cliffs with his friends Doley and Mard, and they would sit for hours, staring eastward, hoping to see the magnificent, slow-moving windships of Simbala. It was well known that the Sim were magicians and sorcerers and that even the smallest of them could shrivel cornstalks with a glance Though Johan and his friends knew they should not be fascinated by the crafts of the sorcerers, still they stared, hoping to glimpse the sails of the distant windships in the clouds.

No Fandoran had ever seen a windship at close range. Until last week, none had ever crossed the Strait of Balomar. Johan remembered the wide-eyed accounts of the couriers who had brought news of a ship that had swooped out of the sky without warning, its sails flapping like Old Witch Winter's cloak as it crashed into a high townhouse gable in Gordain. A shower of embers had been cast from the small boat beneath the sail, and the resulting fire had caused damage to a half-dozen homes. No rider was found in the ship, and its descent had been blamed on the sorcery of Simbala

Johan sailed dizzyingly in a wide arc over the water The Sim, the couriers had said, must be magicians How else could they make boats fly? Yet, Johan thought here he was, flying as swiftly as any Sim and he was not a magician He had seen Amsel build the Wing himself without sorcery What if the Sim had built their windships just as Amsel had built his Wing?

Many folk, his father included, were worried about the possibility of another attack by the magicians of the Simbalese What if they were not magicians, but humans like Amsel and himself? Johan wondered. Perhaps the Sim were not people to be feared, after all. Perhaps Amsel was right when he said that the unknown should not be feared just because it was unknown.

Filled with the joy of flight, Johan was sure that he could convince his father, and everyone else, that Amsel was a man of vision. Johan's dreams soared higher than the Wing he rode and in them, his friend Amsel, that shy and strange man, would teach the Fandorans marvelous things. And he, Johan, would become his apprentice and be privy to all the wonderful secrets and inventions that filled Amsel's forest home

Johan flew through the bright day happier than he had ever been. He flew and dreamed, and occupied by his dreams, was blind to the nightmare coming until it was far too late

The sight and sound of terror came simultaneously as Johan swooped over a white sickle of beach two hundred feet below heading inland, he saw his small shadow overtaken by a vast, batwinged blackness. There was a deafening screech, and then a hurricane hit him, born of giant wings Then, the dreams fell swiftly to darkness, and the dreamer to death Johan hardly had time to comprehend the casual shattering of his life. The torn leather and broken frame fell, and he fell with it screaming and grasping at the mocking wind. As he fell, he caught a single glimpse of the dragon, its mouth open, blotting out the world. The pain was mercifully brief

The sun was late. The day was falling toward evening and Johan had not returned to lead the plowhorse through the north field, or to wring the vithe fiber dry His dinner of bannock leaves and fish had grown cold on the table He was late as he had been late before, and Jondalrun, his father, was angry

Jondalrun was a gray and dusty man, a farmer of Fandora. He owned two small fields, a cottage, and a barn, and he worked from dawn to darkness tilling soil and tending livestock In the summer he carted his produce daily to market in Tamberly Town, a mile from his farm. He was an elder of the village one of the three who sat in occasional council on the problems and grievances that are a part of any small community

Jondalrun seldom smiled he seldom had cause The skin about his eyes was as furrowed and brown as the fields about his house, and his hair and beard flowed almost to his waist He carried a sturdy oaken staff, and so gnarled were his hands that it was hard to tell where human limb ended and tree limb began He was a man who felt that he had no quarrel with his lot in life Yet, there were times when he would ram his plow through the rocky soil, wielding it like a sword in battle, or thresh the harvested grain as though he were using a whip He had been a farmer for twenty years and a father for eighteen He thought of his first son, Dayon, who had left home four years ago, and scowled, shaking his head. Was Johan turning out to be a vagabond, as his brother had? Why didn't the boy understand that there was always work to be completed? Life was hard, as it should be People were not meant to live like the Simbalese—the wealthy, decadent, perfumed Simbalese

Jondalrun climbed slowly up the winding trail toward the cliffs. He had raised Johan as best he knew how, as he would have raised a crop of millet or barley, with methodical care and devotion. The devotion was seldom shown, though always there. It had been enough for him as a child—it should be enough for any child. Evidently, it had not been enough for Dayon, and did not seem to be enough for Johan.

Worried, he shook his head. The fault did not lie with him. Johan had no business playing when there was work to be done. Hard work was the lot of a farmer, and Johan would do well to learn that. Jondalrun tapped his staff grimly against his hand. He did not carry it solely to aid his trek to the seaside cliffs, for, though he was old, the decades of farming under the hot sun had baked him brown and hard. He carried it also because Johan had a lesson to learn. Like his brother before him, he was too play minded. It was time he grew up.

Jondalrun knew that his son's mischief had to be connected with that madman, Amsel, the wrong-thinker, the fool who constantly filled his son's head with dangerous notions. He recalled Johan once saying that according to Amsel everything was alive—the rocks, the air, the wattle and mud-daub of Jondalrun's barn—everything. The only difference was the amount of life in things—consciousness. 'Amsel had called it. Johan had balked at breaking up dirt clods in the furrows after that, for fear of killing them. Jondalrun shook his head grimly. Amsel was dangerous, no question about that. The hermit had to be Simbalese. Jondalrun was sure that Amsel had something to do with the Sim attack on Gordain Town.

He topped the final rise on the trail and stood on a precipice overlooking the sea. He blinked at the sheer blueness of the ocean, and the grandeur of the spires and natural towers of the cliffs. The iron-rich earth was banded in shades of brown and red, which merged with the white sand far below. Jondalrun watched the waves comb themselves free of seaweed on the rocks, and listened to the gulls' sharp cries. He took a deep breath and reluctantly let himself savor the salty air. When he had been a lad, many a happy time had he spent exploring the caves and crannies of these cliffs. It gave him an odd feeling of comfort to know that they were still here, unchanged since his youth. He stood for a long, quiet moment, contemplating the beauty of it, feeling guilty for letting himself enjoy it. Then he suddenly remembered something his wife had told him years ago about Dayon. 'A pair of young legs cannot constantly trod the same beaten path from barn to cottage,' she had said. 'They must be able to climb hills and run through the surf as well.' Jondalrun stared at the sea. His wife was dead now, and Dayon was long gone. Johan did do his chores, albeit late at times. Jondalrun remembered evenings of his own youth spent watching the cliff fishermen cranking laden nets up the sheer rock walls, listening agape to their legends of giant seaworms and dragons. As he reached the top of the cliffs, he was lost in the memories of his childhood. Then he remembered the reason for his trip. He frowned again, seeking to recapture the anger he had somehow lost. He tried to rekindle it by thinking of Amsel, but even that did not make him feel sternly toward Johan. His son was a good boy. Well, Jondalrun thought, perhaps the lad's shoulders would not sting quite so hard this time. Perhaps they would not sting at all. He did not want to lose another son.

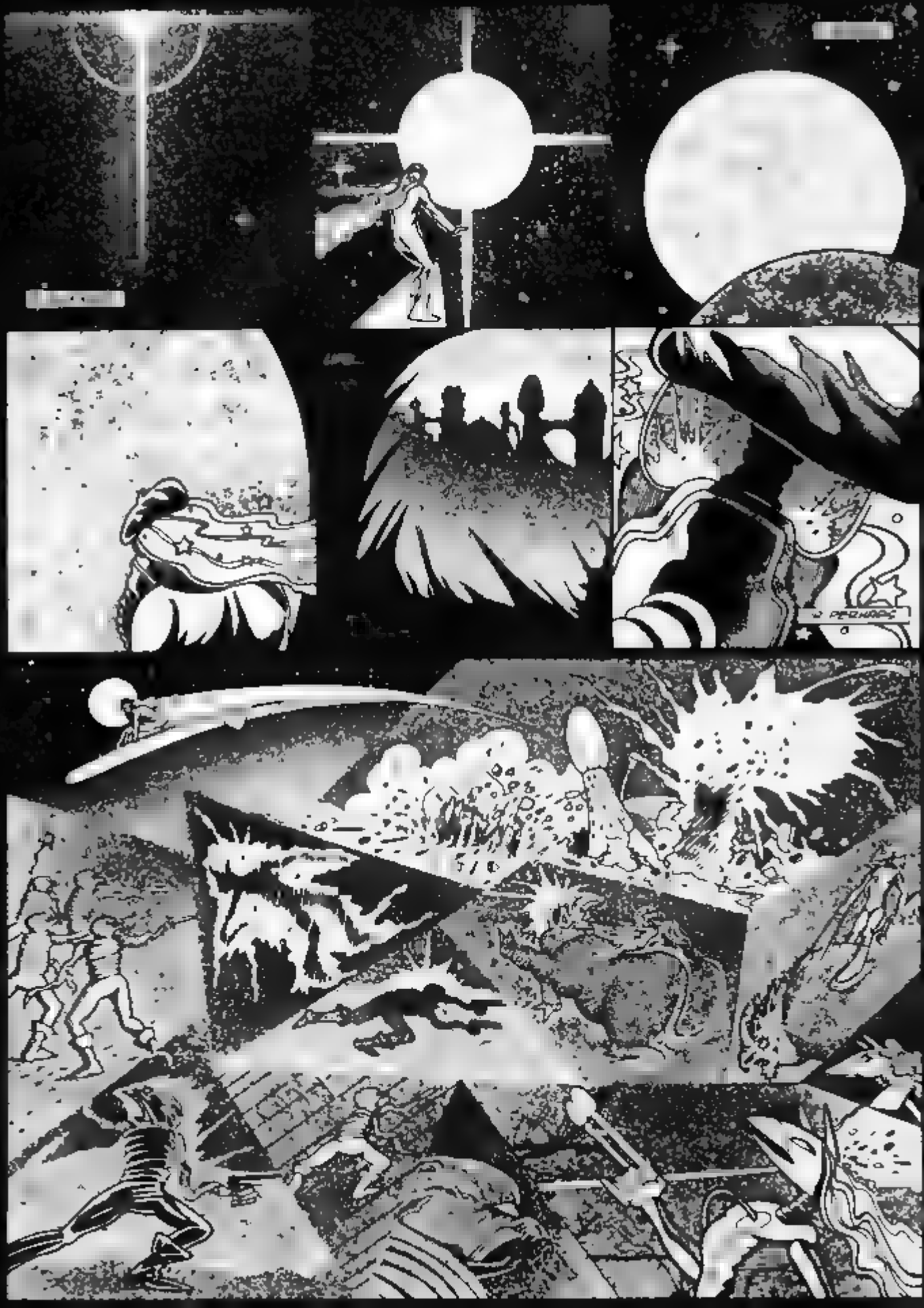
It was then that the old man saw the twisted wreckage on the beach below him, pushed gently by the waves, and the silent body whose clothes he recognized.

There followed a gray time of rocks and pain. Jondalrun hung from crumbling ledges, slid down steep slopes of talus, and twice he fell, jarring the breath from him for some time. Afterward, as he crouched moaning, holding Johan's broken form in his arms, he looked up once at the cliff and wondered fleetingly how he had managed the impossible descent. But there was no room for thought of that, no room for anything but the grim, wordless sorrow. He remained on the beach for a long, unnoticed time, until the moon had risen and the advancing tide soaked his legs. Then, he pulled Johan gently up the beach. The boy's broken legs were tangled in rawhide ropes, and for the first time, Jondalrun examined the wreckage.

It belonged to Amsel the hermit. He would have known that even if he had not seen the distinctive rune branded into the leather sail. Jondalrun had heard tales of the hermit's flying Wing. So Johan had flown, like some young, untried bird, seduced by Amsel's mad stories. Jondalrun looked about. The wreckage was scattered over a wide area, as though something had caused the Wing to come apart in midair. Also, the heavy leather sail was ripped, as were Johan's clothes—ripped and slashed. Jondalrun looked up, seeking a reason. He stared across the water at the distant, moonlit shores of Simbala, and, against the gibbous moon, saw the silhouette of a windship moving slowly toward the east.

Jondalrun stared at it, trembling. Slowly he raised his staff. Struck by moonlight, it gleamed, a cold fire of rage. 'My son is dead,' he said. 'My son is dead!' he shouted. "For that I'll see your trees burn! I'll see blood run your rivers and stain the sea! Warlocks or no, you I fear my coming. My son is dead, and he will be avenged!"

A SPACE STORY
BY PETER A. KUPER

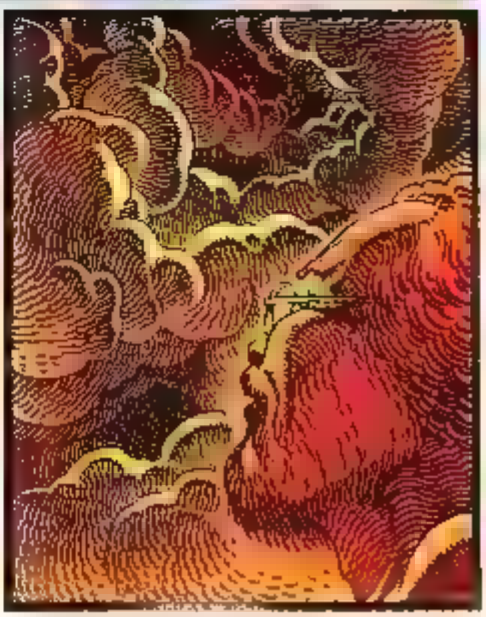

PERHAPS

NEW ARK CITY

AUG 2ND
THERE THEY'VE GONE!
HOW NICE
STAGGERED VACATIONS ARE REALLY A THING OF THE PAST. THE WAY THEY DO IT NOW IS TO ALL LEAVE FOR THE WHOLE MONTH OF AUGUST! IT'S CRAZY! I'M COMPLETELY ALONE IN THE CITY, SAME AS EVERY YEAR! IT'S PEACEFUL! I QUIETLY WORK AWAY. I READ. I THINK. I MAKE MY LITTLE MEALS. DO MY LITTLE HOUSEWORK. IT'S NOT ALL THAT NICE, REALLY, BECAUSE IT'S HOT, VERY HOT! BUT I CAN WALK AROUND NAKED WITH THE WINDOWS OPEN. I FEEL JUST FINE LIKE THAT! BESIDES, I'M SURE THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE IN THE BUILDING FACING ME. IT'S PEACEFUL, ALL RIGHT! AND WHEN I LISTEN TO MUSIC, I CAN TURN THE RECORD PLAYER UP LOUD. THERE'S NO ONE TO BANG ON THE FLOOR!
OH!
TIME TO CRASH!

BOY OH BOY! I'M NOT FEELING AT ALL WELL THIS MORNING
IT MUST BE THE HEAT
FIRST THING I'VE GOT TO DO IS TAKE A NICE LONG SHOWER! A COLD ONE!
SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!
NO REASON TO FREAK SOMETHING'S GOING ON HERE!
DON'T PANIC
I'LL GO LOOK IN THE HALL YES TO SEE IF
BLOODY HEAT!
RIGHT
OUTSIDE TOO?

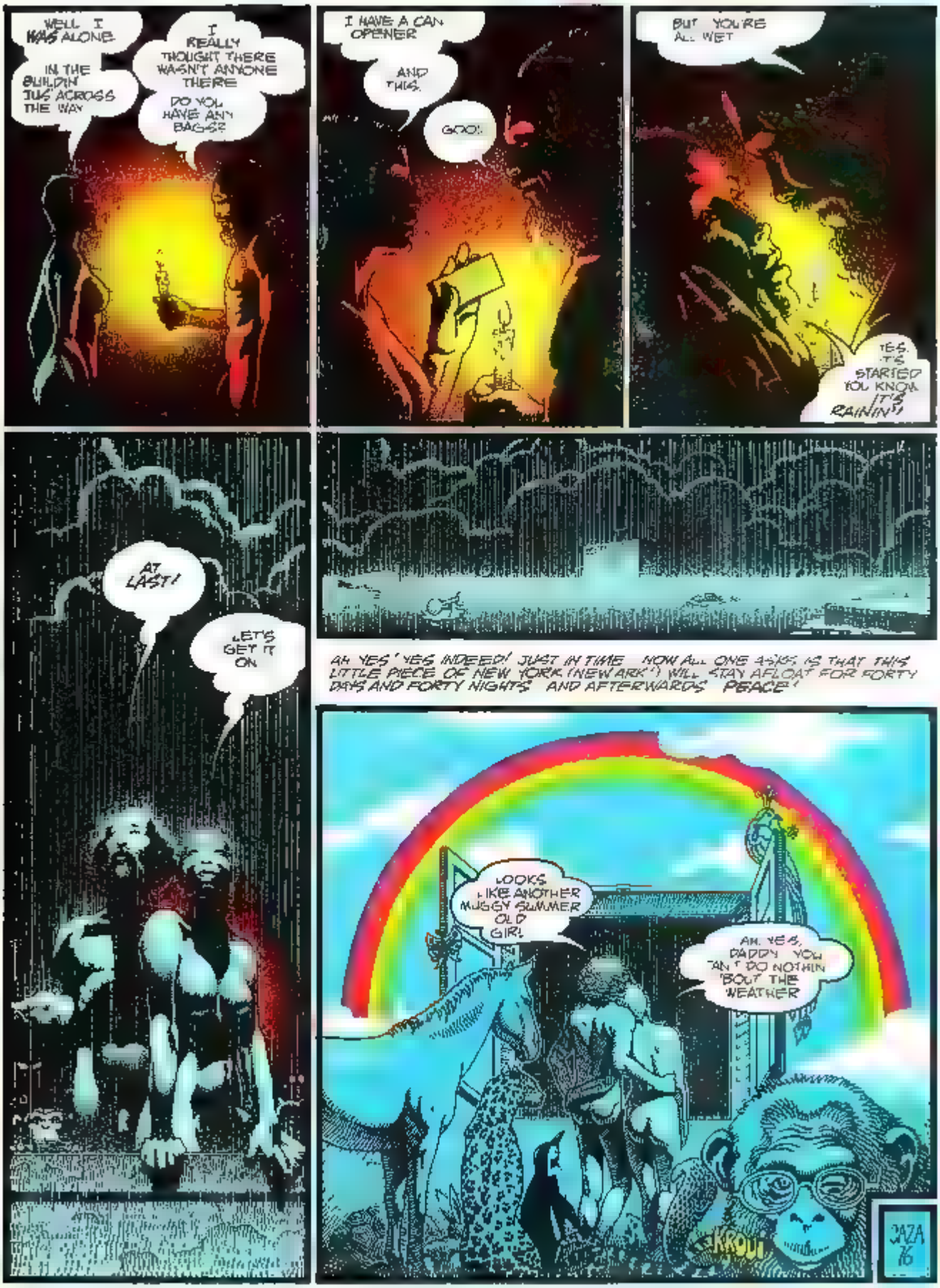
RIGHT! I GET IT... SOONER OR LATER IT HAD TO HAPPEN. IT JUST GOES TO SHOW THERE'S A GOD AFTER ALL... SURE TOO MANY DAMN CHEMICALS IN THE ATMOSPHERE. HEAVY GASSES, NOT NECESSARILY TOXIC, BUT INCREDIBLY HEAT-RETAINING. SO EVAPORATION & THE HUMIDITY FURTHER ACCENTUATES THE NOT-HOUSE EFFECT. THEN THE MELTING POLAR ICE CAPS, RISING SEA LEVEL. THAT COULD BRING BETTER WEATHER. BUT EVEN SO, I'D BETTER NOT LOSE ANY TIME. IN ANY CASE, I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO NOW.



CRACK!
SHUT
SELVES AT HOME
PUR

AUG. 14TH-15TH-16TH TO FEED EVERYONE, I HAD TO OPEN THE SUPERMARKET AT THE CORNER, CLOSED FOR THE MONTH. OBVIOUSLY (REOPENED BY ME ON THE 15TH OF AUGUST) 125 CARTS FULL! BUT THERE WASN'T ANY FODDER!
THEY'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH CANNED GOODS. HOPE I DIDN'T FORGET A CAN OPENER
SUPE
AUG. 17TH-18TH NOW TO GET THE BUILDING LOOSE FROM THE GROUND. IT WASN'T EASY IN THE SUMMER HEAT ALL THE WAY AROUND WITH PICK AND SHOVEL! TOOK TWO DAYS! WHAT A JOB!
AUG 20TH I DIDN'T HAVE TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY GETTING THE NEXT JOB DONE. I PINCHED A TAR-SPRAYING MACHINE FROM A CONSTRUCTION SITE (CLOSED FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST) IT STINKS AND IT'S NOT PRETTY TO LOOK AT BUT IT WOULD HOLD FOR A WHILE AT LEAST
THE BASEMENT BLOCKED OFF AND THE DOOR TOO. A MAN'S GOTTA DO WHAT A MAN'S GOTTA DO!
I HAD ALSO TAKEN CARE TO ARRANGE A WAY BACK IN
AAAAHHH I'M COMPLETELY DONE IN AFTER ALL THAT.
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, LAZY BONES?
WHAT IF "THEY" COME BACK NOW? NO. I DON'T THINK THEY WILL. THEY'RE ALL STILL AT THE BEACH. WHEN THEY DO RETURN, IT'LL BE TOO LATE. WE'RE ALL READY. DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL. ORGANIZED THAT
THAT NIGHT THE BAROMETRIC PRESSURE OF THE ATMOSPHERE INCREASED NOTICEABLY. AS DID THE HEAT AND THE STATIC ELECTRICITY. IT HAD TO END IN A STORM. AND
KRASHA

BKAP!!!
...ERE, HE STORM'S BROKEN
SEEMS THERE'S A POWER FAILURE
MMM...
WHERE THE FUCK DID I PUT THE MATCHES?
MOND...
ARE YOU ALONE?

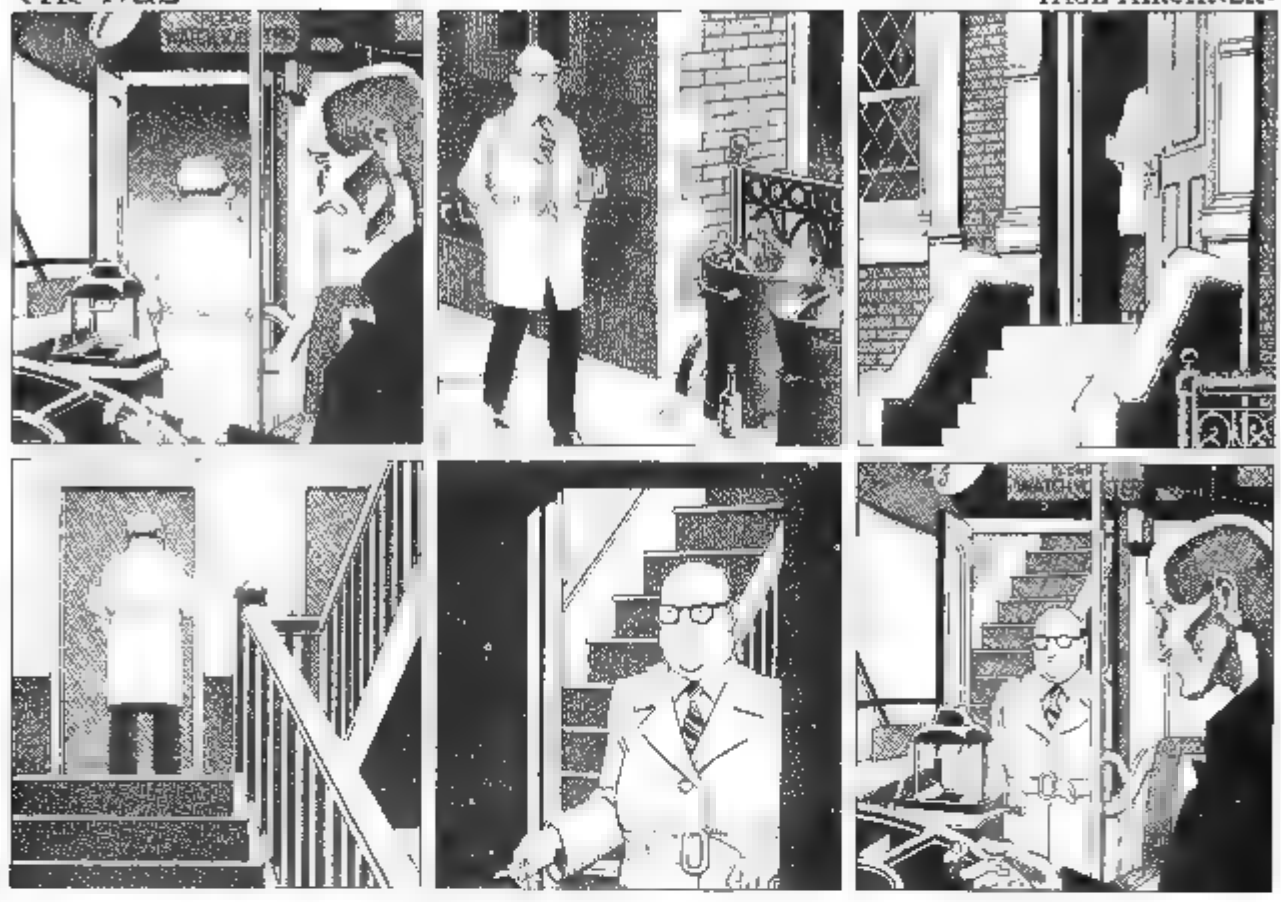

WELL I WAS ALONE
IN THE BUILDIN' JUS' ACROSS THE WAY
I REALLY THOUGHT THERE WASN'T ANYONE THERE
DO YOU HAVE ANY BAGS?
I HAVE A CAN OPENER
AND THIS.
GOO!.
BUT YOU'RE ALL WET
YES. IT'S STARTED YOU KNOW IT'S RAININ'!
AT LAST!
LET'S GET IT ON
AH YES ' YES INDEED! JUST IN TIME NOW ALL ONE ASKS IS THAT THIS LITTLE PIECE OF NEW YORK (NEW ARK ') WILL STAY AFLOAT FOR FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS AND AFTERWARDS PEACE '
LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER MUGGY SUMMER OLD GIRL
AH, YES, DADDY YOU AIN ' DO NOTHIN 'BOUT THE WEATHER
KROUT
JAZA 16

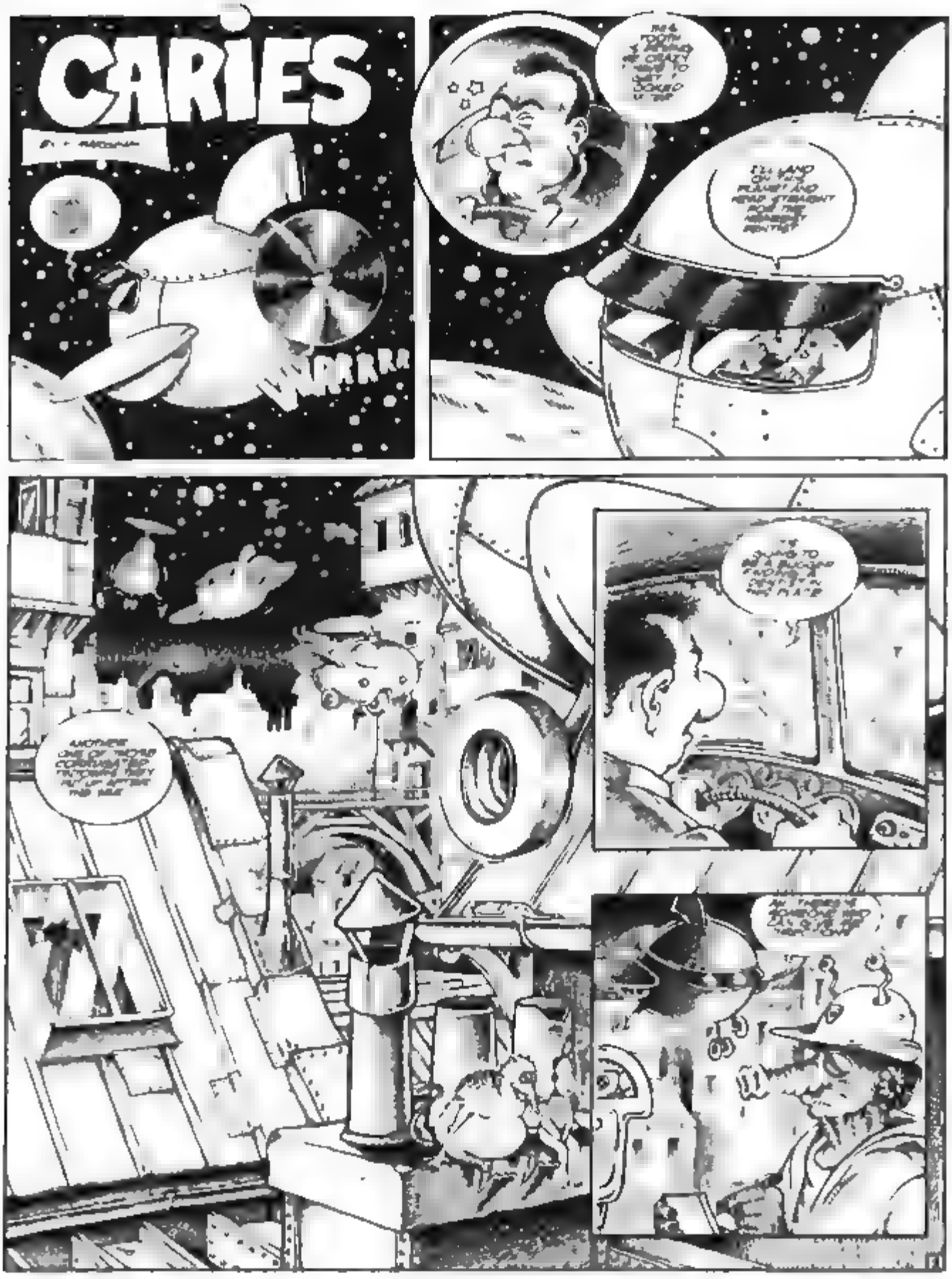
We are all in the hands of greater powers. But nothing has GOT to be unless it is MEANT to be. Otherwise all is mere accident
But why is it meant to be unless it's GOT to be meant to be?
You get trouble believing in it because you're FATED not to

you want to PLATTER
because you ARE fated to, not because it's true! —And what IF I were fated not to believe in fate? Why are you trying to change my mind?
that philosophy shit — gives me the willies!

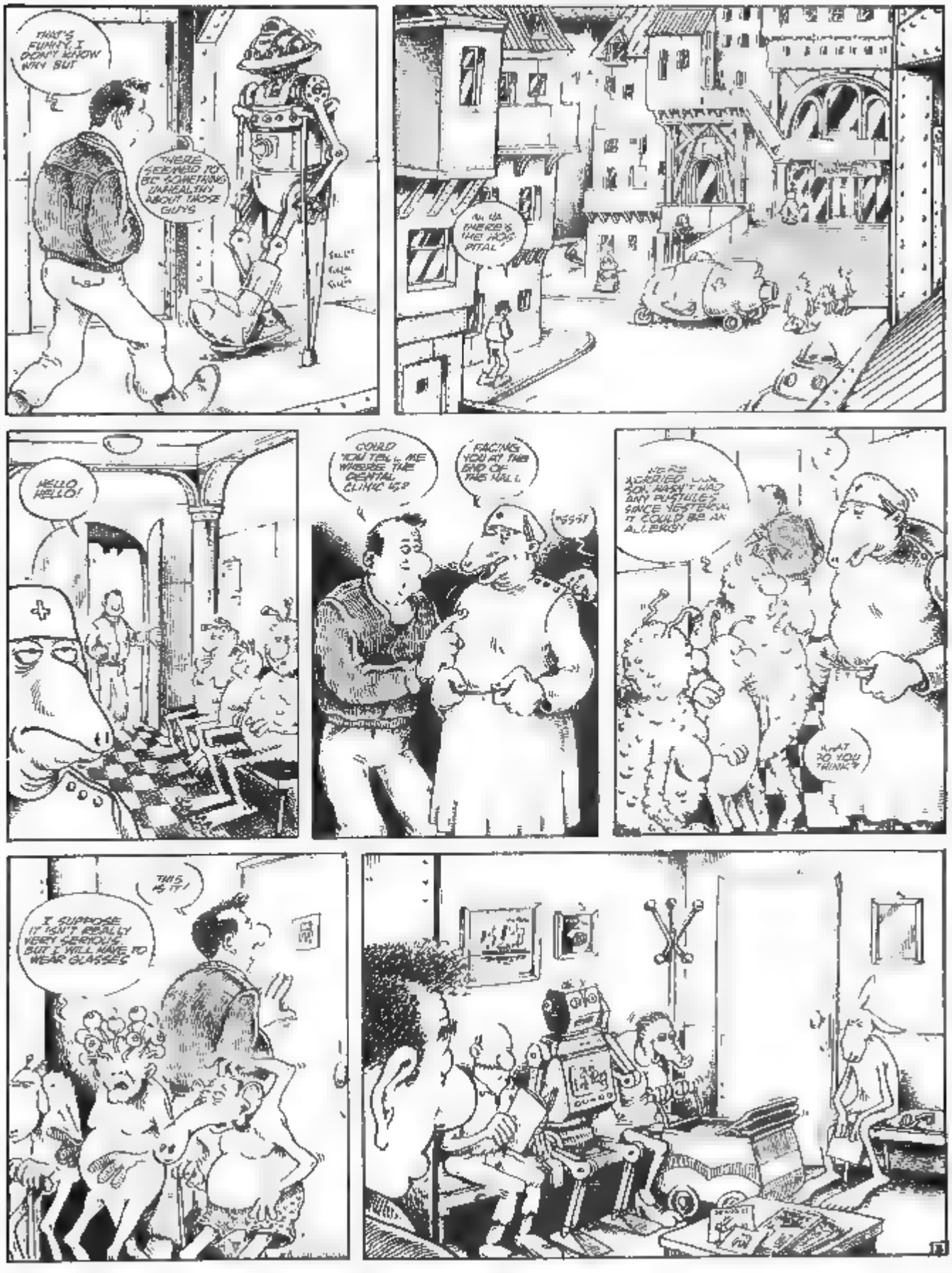
the bus

PAUL KIRCHNER©

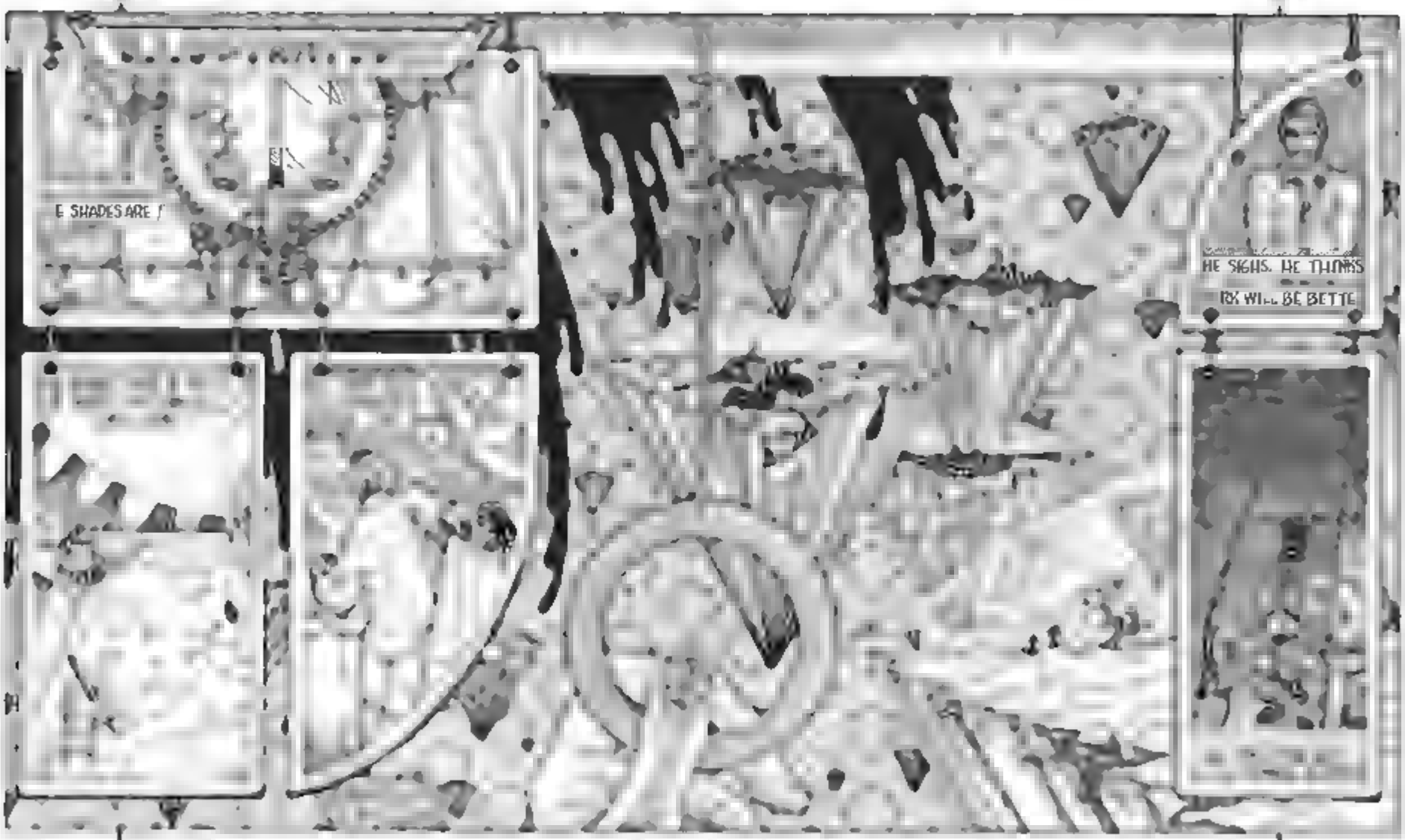


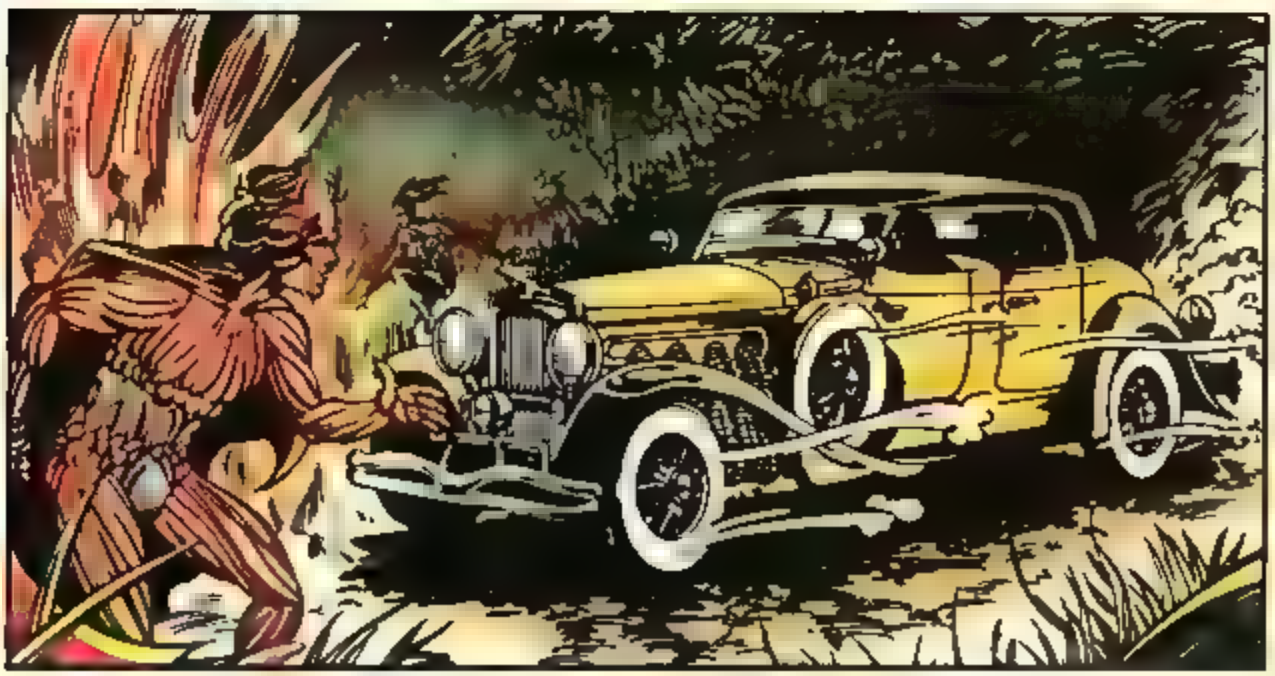

CARIES
WARRRR

EXCUSE ME, DO YOU KNOW WHERE I COULD GET THIS TAKEN CARE OF? I MUST HAVE A CAVITY OR AN ABSCESS
OH, HERE ON REAR
THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION! FEELS BETTER ALREADY!
IT'S TOO BAD, BUT IT'S NOT TOO SERIOUS, NOTHING TO GET UPSET ABOUT
YOU MUST HAVE CHANGED A LOT HAPPENING TO BE A LOT
OBVIOUSLY THE INHABITANTS OF THIS PLACE DON'T HAVE MUCH LIKE US
OH, THERE ARE TWO WHO LOOK NORMAL
PARDON ME, SIR!
IS THERE A DENTIST AROUND HERE?
A DENTIST?
SEAN A DENTIST! DON'T YOU EVER GET TOOTHACHES?
OF COURSE WE DO.
NO, THANK YOU, I'M FINE!
NOT TOO BAD, THANKS!
AH, IT'S LOOK BETTER THAN ME!
I THINK YOU'LL FIND ONE IN THE HOSPITAL OVER THERE!


THAT'S FUNNY, I DON'T KNOW WHY BUT
THERE SEEMED TO BE SOMETHING UNHEALTHY ABOUT THOSE GUYS
SALLY GAVE GUYS
AH HA THERE'S THAT HOSPITAL
HELLO, HELLO!
COULD YOU TELL ME WHERE THE DENTAL CLINIC IS?
FACING YOU AT THE END OF THIS HALL
PSSST
HERE ACCORDING TO MY CHART YOU HAVEN'T HAD ANY PUSTULES SINCE YESTERDAY IT COULD BE AN ALLERGY
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I SUPPOSE IT ISN'T REALLY VERY SERIOUS BUT I WILL HAVE TO WEAR GLASSES
THIS IS IT!

MAN AFTER NOON!
SIR
YES?
WHAT'S ME
IT'S FOR ME & HIS BABY MOLAR THE FIRST NEEDS A CROWN!
NICE DOING BID
EXCUSE ME I'VE GOT ANOTHER APPOINTMENT I'LL LEAVE YOU THIS PART TO TAKE CARE OF I'LL BE BACK TO PICK IT UP IN AN HOUR OK?
KING
EXCUSE ME, BUT HAVE YOU COME HERE TO GET YOUR TEETH FIXED, TOO?
NO WAY, BUT THE DOC HAD ME COME OVER HERE TO WATCH THE BALL GAME
LATER
NEXT
OH OH!
EEK!
SIT DOWN THE DOCTOR WILL BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE
A HUMAN BEING
WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED TALKING TO MY POLITICIAN, MAYBE WE CAN START ON THAT TOOTH
HA HA! WITH ALL THESE GONZOS AROUND, I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN WHAT'S NORMAL. YOU KNOW, YOU THINK YOU'RE A REGULAR GUY, BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU ASK YOURSELF
END


E SHADES ARE /
HE SIGHS. HE THINKS
IX WILL BE BETTE



A BOMBARDIA™ PRODUCTION BY JIMMY WALLY/CONTROLLED CHAOS (DEDICATED TO RAND HOLMES)
LYRICS: JAGGER/RICHARD STORY CONCEPT: WALLY ADAPTATION: WALLY/MIKE ARTICLE: MIKE DU
INKS-LETTERING: BILL PAYNE COLORS: MARTIN SPRINGETT

"PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF."
"I'M A MAN OF WEALTH AND TASTE."
"I'VE BEEN AROUND FOR LONG, LONG YEARS!"

"I WAS 'ROUND WHEN JESUS CHRIST HAD HIS MOMENT OF DOUBT AND PAIN..."
"MADE DAMN SURE
WASHED HIS HANDS...
AND SEALED HIS FATE."
"PLEASED TO MEET YOU, HOPE YOU GUESS MY NAME, BUT WHAT'S PUZZLING YOU IS THE NATURE OF MY GAME."

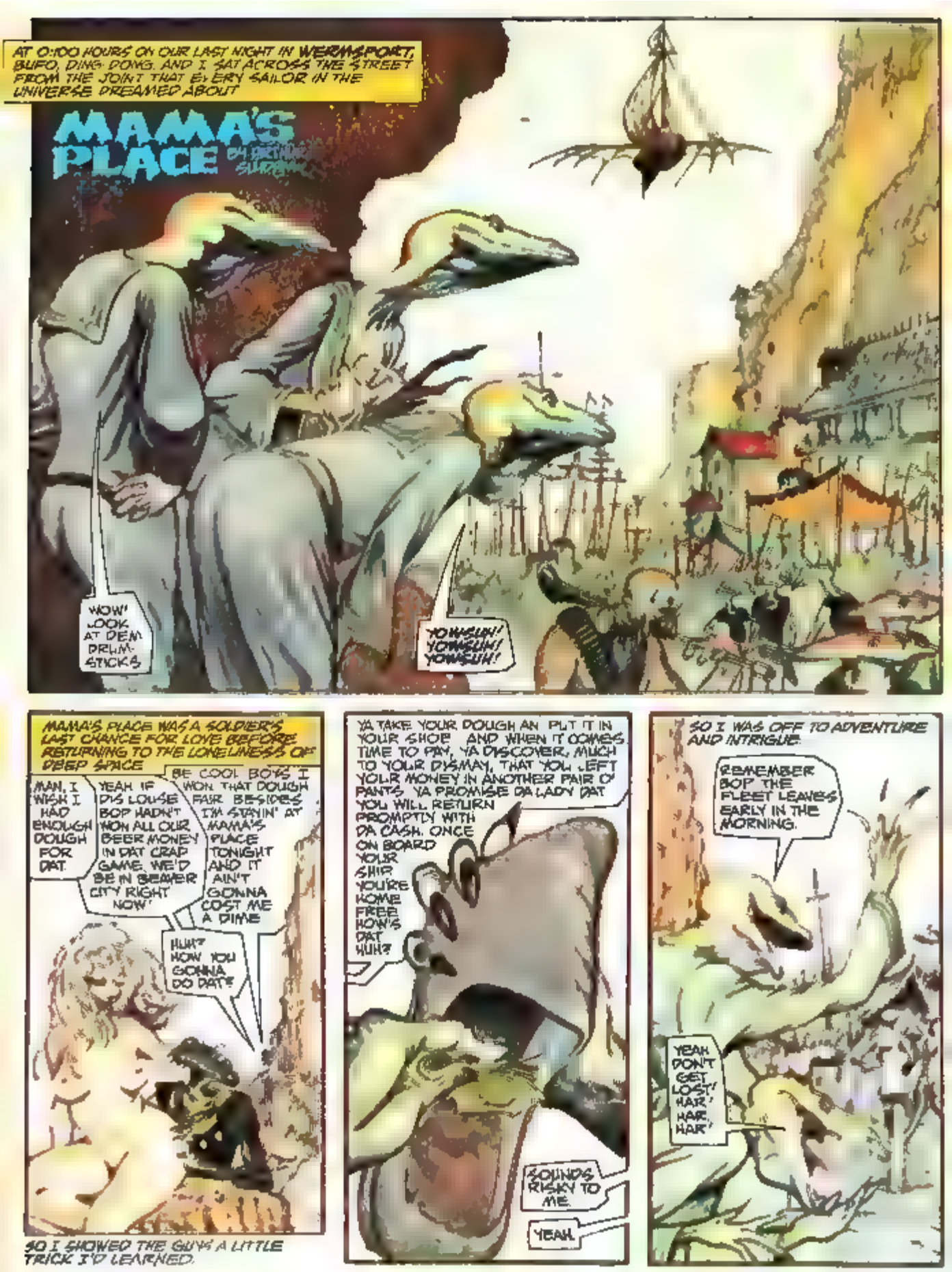
"I STUCK AROUND ST. PETERSBURG WHEN I SAW IT WAS A TIME FOR A CHANGE."
"KILLED THE TSAR AND HIS MINISTERS. ANASTASIA...SCREAMED IN VAIN."
"PLEASED TO MEET YOU, HOPE YOU GUESS MY NAME -OH YEAH! WHAT'S PUZZLING YOU IS THE NATURE OF MY NAME -AWW YEAH!"

"I WATCHED WITH GLEE WHILE YOUR KINGS AND QUEENS FOUGHT FOR TEN DECADES — — FOR THE GODS THEY MADE. I SHOUTED OUT, 'WHO KILLED THE KENNEDYS?' WHEN AFTER ALL — IT WAS YOU AND ME.'
"LET ME PLEASE INTRODUCE MYSELF. I'M A MAN OF WEALTH AND TASTE. AND I LAY TRAPS FOR TROUBADORS WHO GET KILLED BEFORE THEY REACH BOMBAY."
"PLEASED TO MEET YOU. HOPE YOU GUESS MY NAME. —OH YEAH!"
"BUT WHAT'S PUZZLING YOU IS THE NATURE OF MY GAME — AH YEAH! AH — GET DOWN, BABY!"

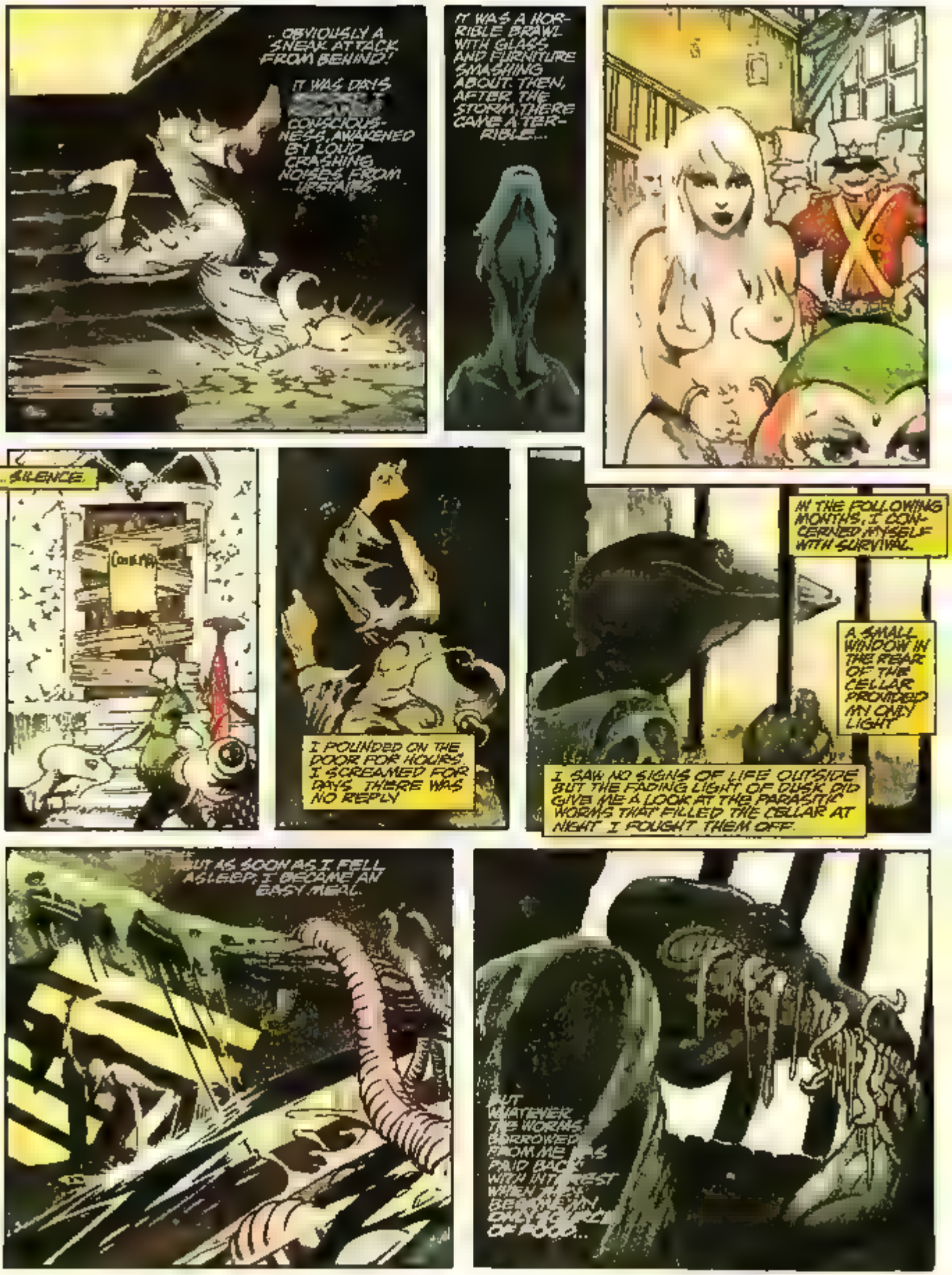
"PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
HOPE YOU GUESS MY NAME.
OH WAIT— BUT WHAT'S
COMPARING YOU TO A
BARREL OF MY OWN
MWAH HAHA!"

"JUST AS EVERY COP IS A CRIMINAL, AND ALL THE SINNERS --SAINTS."
"AS HEADS IS TAILS, JUST CALL ME— LUCIFER."
"'CAUSE I'M IN NEED OF SOME RESTRAINT."
"SO IF YOU MEET ME, HAVE SOME COURTESY . . HAVE SOME SYMPATHY . AND SOME TASTE!"
"USE ALL YOUR WELL-
SOUL TO WASTE— MMM YEAH!"
"PLEASED TO MEET YOU, HOPE YOU GUESS MY NAME. —MM YEAH! BUT WHAT'S PUZZLING YOU IS THE NATURE OF MY GAME. MMM MEAN IT!"
"GET DOWN!"

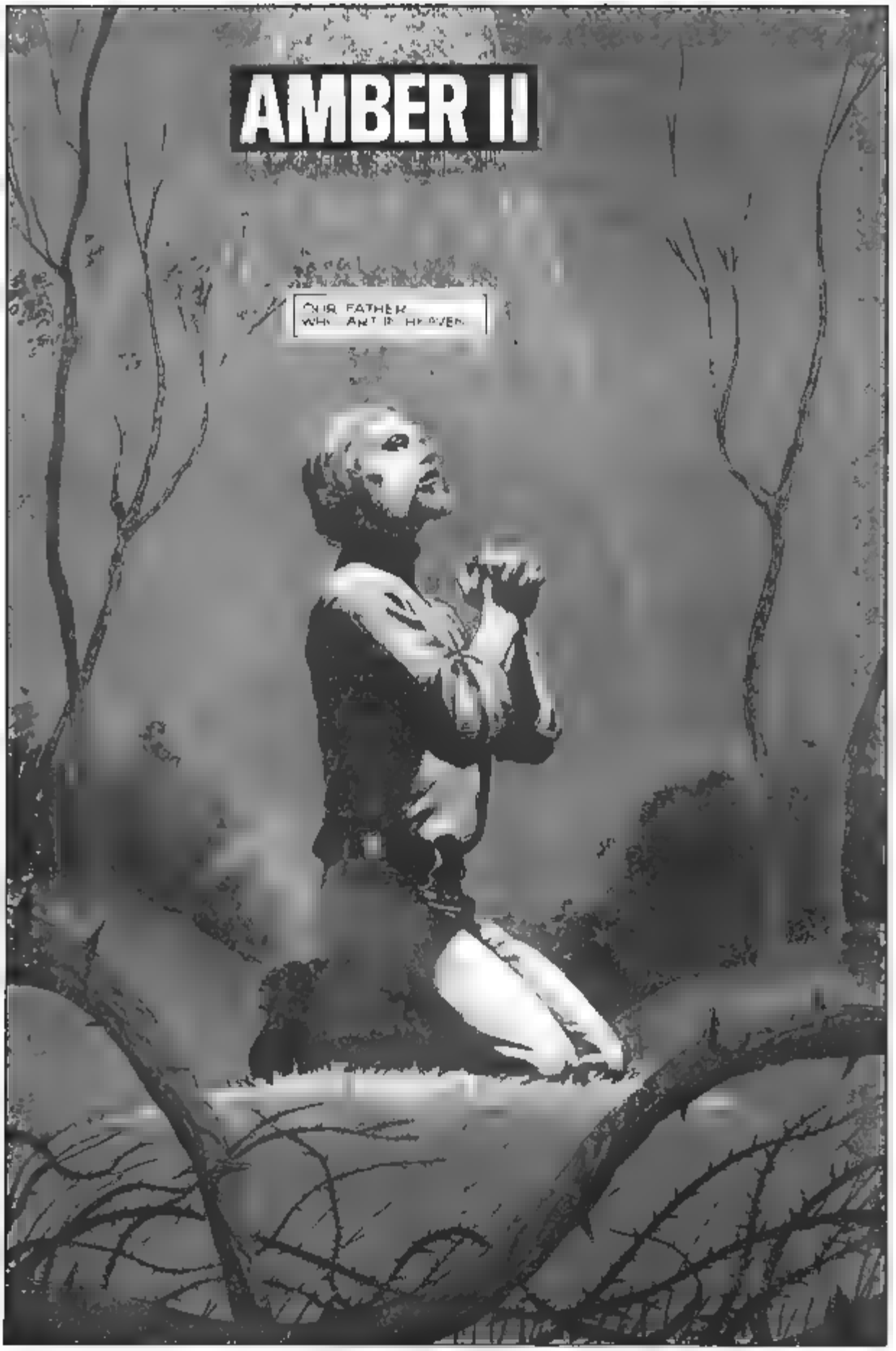
"WHOOOHOO! AWW YEAH, GET ON DOWN! OH YEAH!"
"YEAH...AWWW
"TELL ME, BABY' WHAT'S MY NAME?"
"TELL ME, HONEY...
CAN YOU GUESS...
MY NAME?!"
"TELL ME BABY! WHAT'S MY NAME?"
"TELL YOU WHAT—"
"—YOU'RE TO BLAME!"
WOOOHOOO! OOOOO! WHOOO!
"AAAH RIGHT!"

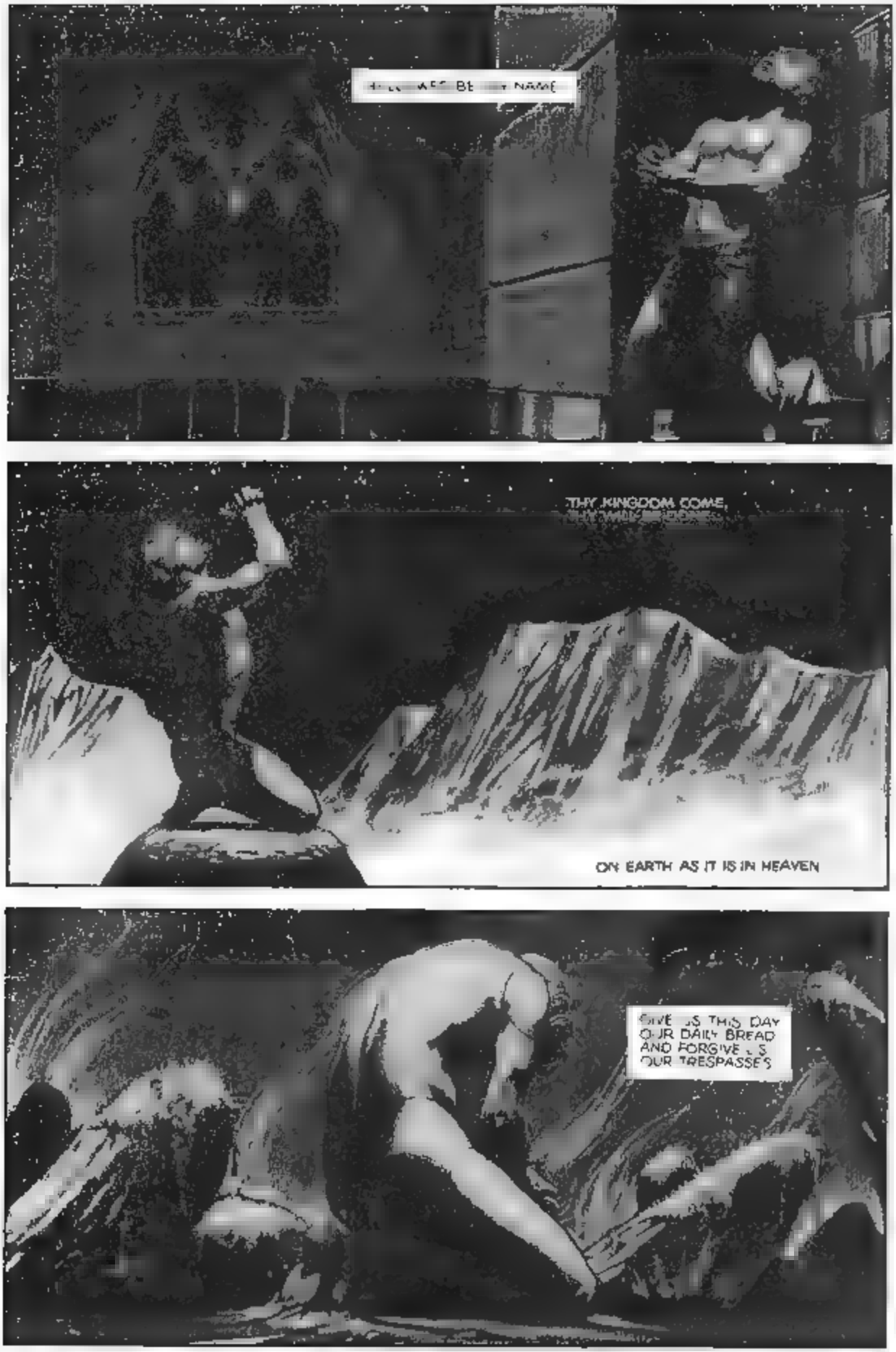

AT 0:100 HOURS ON OUR LAST NIGHT IN WERMSPORT, BUFO, DING-DONG, AND I SAT ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE JOINT THAT EVERY SAILOR IN THE UNIVERSE DREAMED ABOUT
MAMA'S PLACE
WOW! LOOK AT DEM DRUM-STICKS
YOWSUH! YOWSUH! YOWSUH!
MAMA'S PLACE WAS A SOLDIER'S LAST CHANCE FOR LOVE BEFORE RETURNING TO THE LONELINESS OF DEEP SPACE
MAN, I WISH I HAD ENOUGH DOUGH FOR DAT
YEAH IF DIS LOUSE BOP HADN'T WON ALL OUR BEER MONEY IN DAT CRAP GAME, WE'D BE IN BEAVER CITY RIGHT NOW!
BE COOL BOYS I WON THAT DOUGH FAIR BESIDES I'M STAYIN' AT MAMA'S PLACE TONIGHT AND IT AIN'T GONNA COST ME A DIME
HUH? HOW YOU GONNA DO DAT?
SO I SHOWED THE GUYS A LITTLE TRICK I'D LEARNED.
YA TAKE YOUR DOUGH AN PUT IT IN YOUR SHOE AND WHEN IT COMES TIME TO PAY, YA DISCOVER, MUCH TO YOUR DISMAY, THAT YOU LEFT YOUR MONEY IN ANOTHER PAIR O' PANTS. YA PROMISE DA LADY DAT YOU WILL RETURN PROMPTLY WITH DA CASH. ONCE ON BOARD YOUR SHIP YOU'RE HOME FREE. HOW'S DAT HUH?
SOUNDS RISKY TO ME.
YEAH.
SO I WAS OFF TO ADVENTURE AND INTRIGUE.
REMEMBER BOP THE FLEET LEAVES EARLY IN THE MORNING.
YEAH DON'T GET LOST! HAR! HAR! HAR!

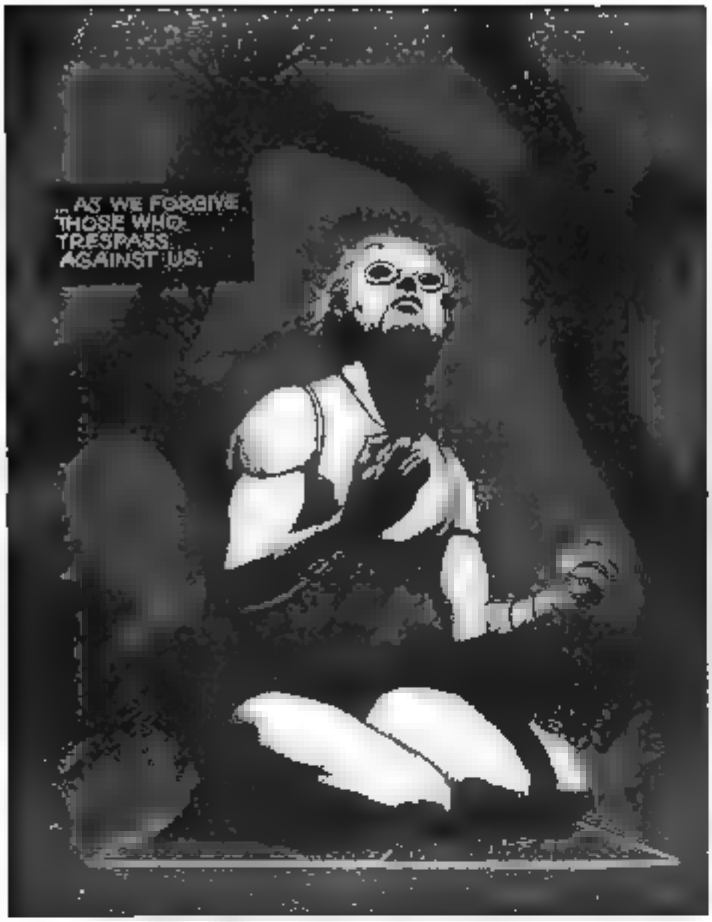
MAMA'S PLACE WAS EVERYTHING I'D IMAGINED—AND MORE. AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF THE GALAXY'S MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN ATTENDED TO MY EVERY WILD DESIRE
BUT WITH THE MORNING SUN, THE PARTY CAME TO AN END AND WHEN BIG MAMA APPEARED AT THE DOOR, I KNEW THE TIME TO PAY WAS AT HAND.
I REACHED INTO ONE OF MY POCKETS AND TURNED IT INSIDE OUT TO REVEAL ITS BARENESS
WHEN I REACHED INTO MY OTHER POCKET AND FOUND THAT IT, TOO, WAS EMPTY, BIG MAMA NEARLY WENT INTO SHOCK
I HASTILY APOLOGIZED FOR MY FORGETFULNESS AND PROMISED TO RETURN MOMENTARILY WITH THE MONEY.
?
WITH CONFUSION AT ITS PEAK, I QUIETLY MADE MY EXIT
WHAT A BUNCHA DOPES! HAR! HAR! HARRECCHHHH!
I WAS ABOUT TO DEVASTATE HIM WITH MY AMAZING TECHNIQUE WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT
IT WAS THE BOUNCER! THE UGLY GOON HOVERED OVER ME LIKE A TREE BUT OFFICERS OF THE FLEET ARE FULLY TRAINED IN THE ART OF SELF-DEFENSE...
WHOM

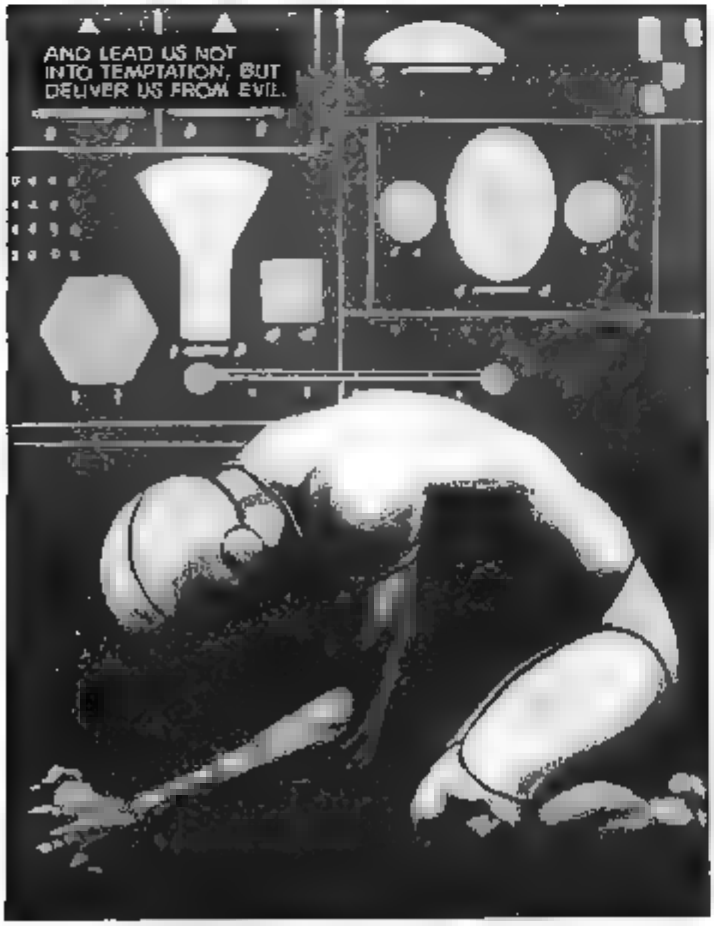

..OBVIOUSLY A SNEAK ATTACK FROM BEHIND!
IT WAS DAYS [redacted] BEFORE CONSCIOUSNESS AWAKENED BY LOUD CRASHING NOISES FROM UPSTAIRS.
IT WAS A HORRIBLE BRAWL WITH GLASS AND FURNITURE SMASHING ABOUT. THEN, AFTER THE STORM, THERE CAME A TERRIBLE...
..SILENCE.
I POUNDED ON THE DOOR FOR HOURS. I SCREAMED FOR DAYS. THERE WAS NO REPLY.
IN THE FOLLOWING MONTHS, I CONCERNED MYSELF WITH SURVIVAL.
A SMALL WINDOW IN THE REAR OF THE CELLAR PROVIDED MY ONLY LIGHT.
I SAW NO SIGNS OF LIFE OUTSIDE BUT THE FADING LIGHT OF DUSK DID GIVE ME A LOOK AT THE PARASITIC WORMS THAT FILLED THE CELLAR AT NIGHT. I FOUGHT THEM OFF.
BUT AS SOON AS I FELL ASLEEP, I BECAME AN EASY MEAL.
BUT WHATEVER THE WORMS BORROWED FROM ME WAS PAID BACK WITH INTEREST WHEN THEY BECAME MY ONLY SOURCE OF FOOD...

ONE DAY WHILE I WAS GROVELING FOR WORMS, I FOUND A TOOL! IT WAS ONLY A SMALL SPOON, BUT IT WOULD SERVE ME WELL IN THE MONTHS TO COME...
THE TWISTED BACK ALLEYS OF WORMSPORT WERE LIKE A MAZE. WITH EACH NEW DEAD-END I EXPLORED I GREW MORE FEEBLE UNTIL, AT LAST, I COULD CRAWL NO MORE
SUDDENLY I HEARD THE FAINT SOUND OF VOICES. IN THE DIST... THERE WAS A FLICKERING LIGHT... COULD IT...
'AKKKK- HELP ME!!
HUH? WHAT DA HELL IS DAT?
AAANH! IT'S A FUCK'IN' QUEER!
WATCH OUT! HE'S REACHIN' FOR YOUR GOODIES!
NO, WAIT! GAWD! IT'S M-ME...
BLAST HIM!
AAIIEE!
IMAGINE! THE NERVE OF DAT GUY!
SAY AIN'T DAT WHERE MAMA'S PLACE USED TO BE?
YEAH AND DAT REMINDS ME
I WONDER WHAT BECAME OF OUR OLD PAL BOP?
AW, HE'S PROBABLY ON SOME TROPICAL PLANET SOMEWHERE
SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN!
END

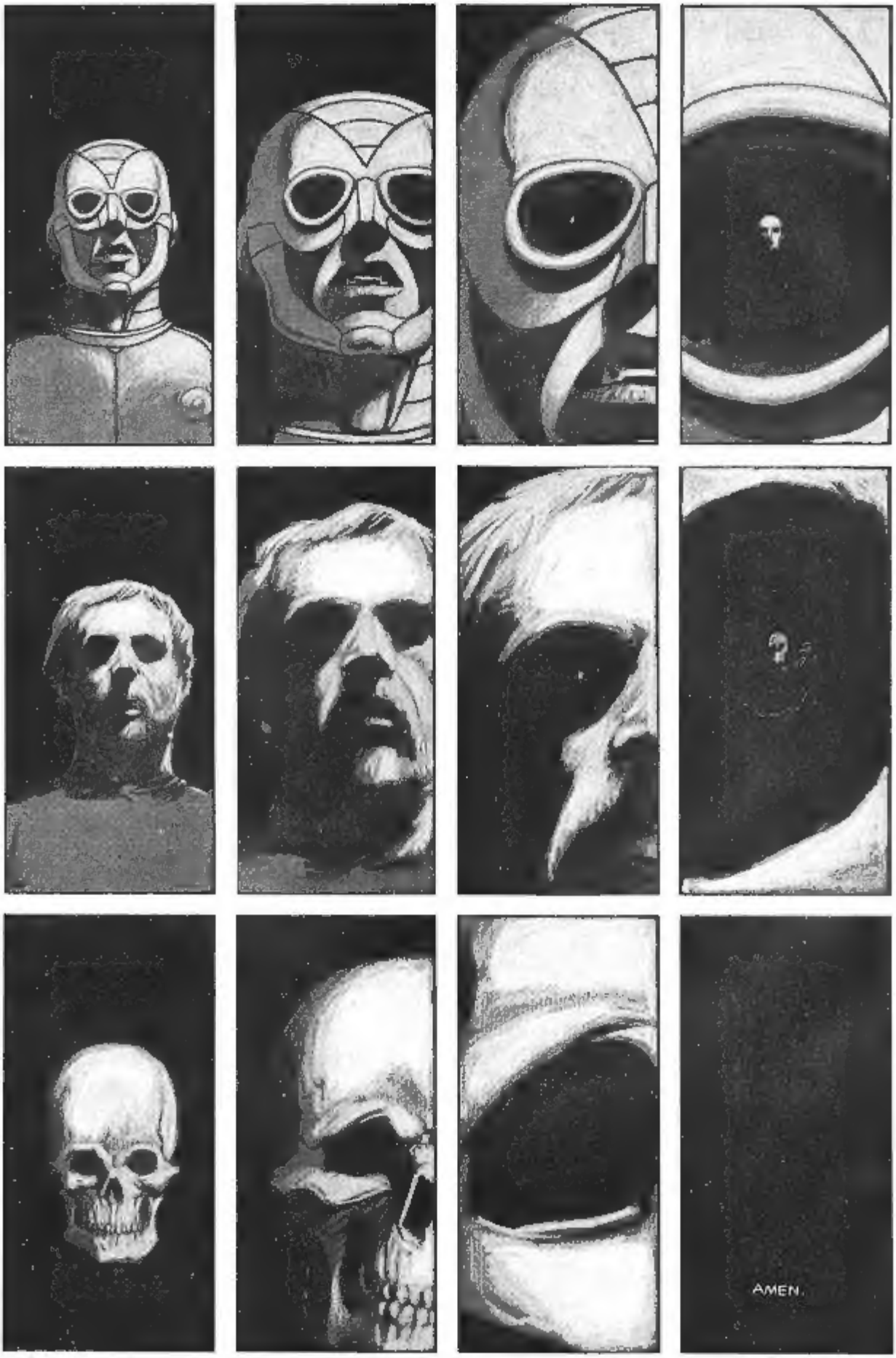

AMBER II
OUR FATHER
WHO ART IN HEAVEN


THY KINGDOM COME,
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN
GIVE US THIS DAY
OUR DAILY BREAD
AND FORGIVE US
OUR TRESPASSES


...AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US.


AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

FOR TH NE .S THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.


AMEN.

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